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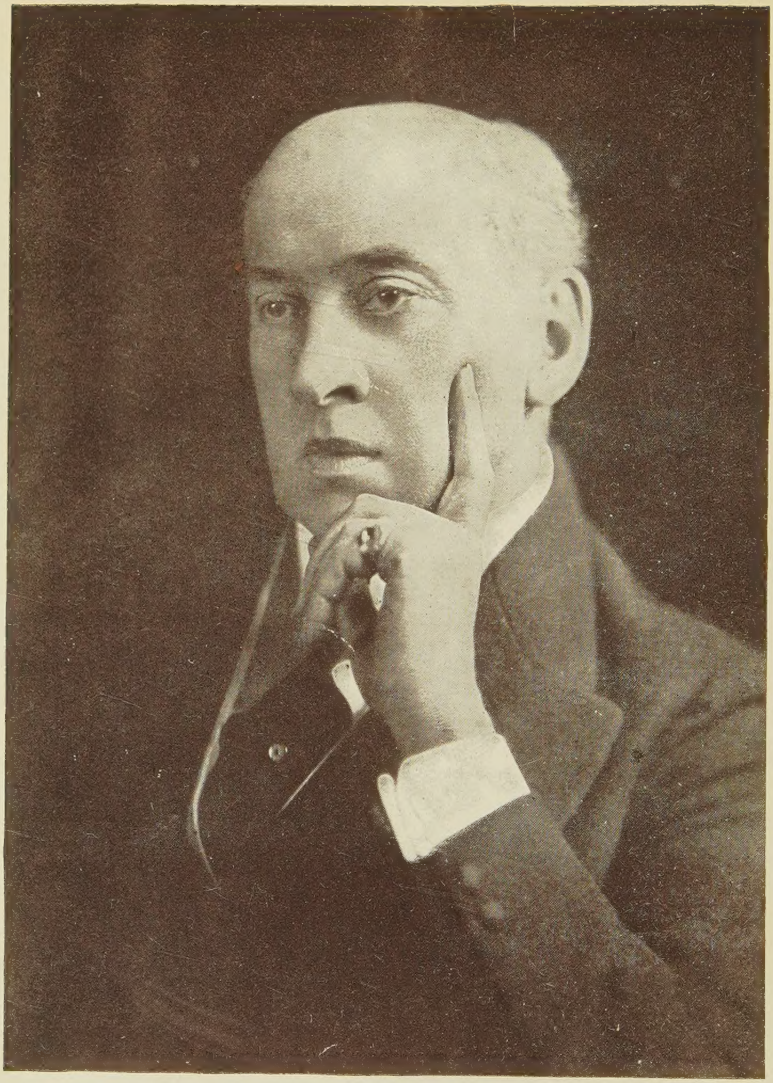
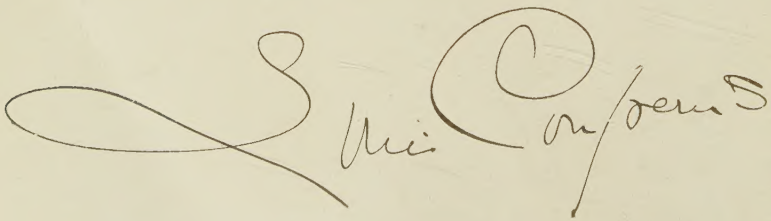
EASTWARD





Frontispiece

EASTWARD

BY

LOUIS COUPERUS

AUTHOR OF

"OLD PEOPLE AND THE THINGS THAT PASS," "SMALL SOULS," ETC.

EXPLORERS
JAMES B. POND
LITERARY
BUREAU

TRANSLATED BY

J. MENZIES-WILSON AND C. C. CRISPIN

WITH FRONTISPIECE AND
THIRTY-SIX OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Louis Couperus was taken from us a few days after he had corrected the last proofs of this work. The Foreword, which I know he intended to write, never flowed from his pen. And, seeing that a short introduction is usual, and that, for many reasons, it is in this case desirable, I have taken upon myself to introduce this book to the reader.

Couperus, in company with his wife, undertook a voyage to the Dutch Indies, China and Japan, as Special Correspondent of the *Haagsche Post*, in the autumn of 1921. In 71 letters, which appeared in the numbers from December 17, 1921, up to and including May 5, 1923, he gave his impressions. The idea of a trip to China had to be abandoned on account of the riots which had broken out there; and he went, after a short stay in Hongkong, straight to Japan, where he fell seriously ill. It was a proof of his remarkable devotion to duty and his extraordinary will-power that he set to work once more, when he was scarcely convalescent, to fulfil the task he had undertaken. And I have often asked myself whether this effort, contrary to the advice of his wife, did not so impair his powers of resistance, that an infection, which might, perhaps, otherwise have been of little or no importance, brought along with it the most grievous consequences.

In the following pages will be found, with omissions and additions and with some—usually slight—alterations in the text, the letters from the Dutch Indies, to which are appended the last portrait of the writer and a number

of reproductions and photographs collected by Mrs. Couperus. The letters from Japan may, perhaps, be published separately later. They form the last great work of the master of Dutch prose, to whom, on June 9 last only, we paid joyful homage on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday, and whom, just a few weeks later, on July 19, we sorrowfully accompanied to his last resting-place at Westerveld.

S. E. Van Oss.

The Hague, August 1923.

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FIRST PART

THE OUTWARD VOYAGE

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EASTWARD

I

For the third time we are off for what a true Dutchman calls the "East." . . . On the first occasion I was ten years old. The Indian tradition had always ruled in my family—my great grandfather was Abraham Couperus, Governor of Malacca; my grandfather, the Governor-General Reynst; my father was a retired official in the legal branch, and when my two eldest brothers in Delft had got "through" for India, the whole family—we were a large number of brothers and sisters—went across once more to the lands of the tropical sun, which were beckoning from afar. Possibly the sun enticed my parents, who could see old age approaching, and it may be that the prospect of gold lace roused my young brother's ambition. At that time we had our family estate, Tjikoppo—an uncle was Administrator: I do not think my father and my brothers were attracted by coffee and its possibilities—as I said before, the sun and gold lace were the real inducements. The blood of officials seemed to flow in the veins of my brothers; the prospect of becoming a Resident one day or perhaps Governor-General like my maternal grandfather seemed to appeal to them. I myself was a dreamy child, and the gold lace of officialdom had no attraction for me. . . . I spent five years at school in Java. . . .

The second time that I went to the Indies I was married and in the thirties. My brother was Assistant

Resident, my cousin was a Major-General and was related to the Governor-General, Van de Wyck. My mother-in-law lived there ; we went, my wife and I, as tourists to visit the family, to see that entrancing land once more ; my wife herself had spent her early years in Java and in Deli itself.

And just like simple tourists, with the means of a Dutch literary man, we went by the German Mail, the *Prince Henry*, and did not hesitate to go second class, which the family, who were in a good position in the Dutch East Indies, and were ready to welcome us with open arms, thought a bit odd, and in the depths of their heart did not approve of very much.

We remained there a tourist's year, stayed with the big-wigs and spent a very nice and congenial time.

I remember gratefully that I stayed with my brother-in-law, de La Valette, the Resident of Tagel, and later on of Passaroean, for to him I owe the glimpse I had into the psychology of the higher officials, so that I ventured to write a book like "De Stille Kracht,"[1] although the mystical element in it was not due to his influence. I was able, from what he told me, to imagine how a Resident head of a district must feel if he has personality.

Now for the third time I am going to the strange alluring land of our colonies, where I, untrue to type, have never sought the things which, according to tradition, so many members of my family have sought.

For I went to find the sun in Italy, and the glittering of gold lace never awakened my ambition.

I am now going as special correspondent to the *Haagsche Post*. I am not travelling second class, as in those days when I was a mere tourist. Through the solicitude of the Steamship Company Nederland, in honour of the much-read Hague paper, a state cabin has been reserved for its correspondent, the same cabin which was destined for the salon of the Governor-General, Foch. We are

[1] Translated into English: "The Hidden Force," by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos.

thus housed like princes, with our bathroom, wardrobe and writing-table. And I only fear that we shall be very spoilt when this voyage is at an end.

The outstanding feature of the beginning of the journey is the ideal weather—a feature which dominates everything else. Ideal summer weather prevails in these October days. The Ijmuiden Canal glitters in the sunshine. Friends and relations of the passengers are stationed all along the locks. If a sad parting is to be taken from the shore or on board this will certainly be most painful. But this time everyone is gay, or apparently so, anyhow. Presumably owing to the sunshine, there is a smile over everybody and everything. Moreover, the weather is so beautiful. This ideal weather which we are enjoying seems incredible. Everyone and everything is in the happiest of moods. Once out on the open sea the passengers get to know each other. People need each other and, where sympathy springs, firm links may be forged. For some weeks social intercourse must be established and cheerful conversations made to re-echo throughout the ship, in between the copious meals. This voyage promises to be a pleasure trip on account of the glorious weather.

The weather is ideal, but this breeds mist. The first night, the horns are hooting between the *Prins der Nederlanden* and various other ships, which rise up in our course like phantom boats in a haze. It is just as though our ship were an airship: around us above the sea of water floats the sea of mist, and the latter alone can be seen from the bridge. It is as though we were suspended in clouds. And above us the air is clear and full of stars, just veiled by a thin haze. We float along warily; the horns hoot always; we lie still on account of the ideal weather which has woven this mist and raised these clouds of fog above the watery mirror.

Southampton: the ideal weather still prevails. It seems as though it would never be anything else. As though it would remain ideal until the end of the world and our voyage. Docks and dockworkers and the work

of loading and unloading. I love watching this work: peaceful, well-calculated, heavy work, when scores of muscular arms strain and pull at chains and cables. Every painter and artist must find it beautiful. No cursing haste such as one might imagine, but a stolid, manly, driving force which makes the wagons roll over the rails. There is beauty in everything and it is always different. It may be found in the charm of a beautiful woman, in a painting or landscape, and again in the tense driving power of a number of dockers' arms at work.

A stop of two nights. An English guide is responsible for amusements: a trip to the Isle of Wight. Some of the passengers even go off to London. Many follow the guide. He loads us up in chars-a-banc: he embarks us on a steamer which takes us to Cowes, famous for its regatta. He puts us into various cars. We motor through romantic, sentimental English scenery—how full of sweet sentiment are the cottages with their low-thatched roofs, among idyllic green, just like the English prints and engravings which we all know so well. To Newport and then to Ventnor. The guide has ordered lunch for his thirty or forty guests at the Royal Marine Hotel. And then we motor to the ruins of Carisbrooke Castle and are shown a charming thirteenth century bay window, and the spot—no longer the room—where Charles I. was imprisoned, and the round look-out tower dominating the surrounding English landscape. You cannot call it sight-seeing, but it is quite a pleasant diversion, if your boat happens to be lying at anchor at Southampton, and very much to be recommended as a nice trip without any bother or trouble.

The ideal weather shows no sign of a change. Where are the first heralds of autumn? A summer god reigns and does not seem to grow old. The sea is like a lake, the sky is blue and cloudless. Porpoises play as the English coast fades. There is no sign of any October storm (although Shackleton, it would seem, came in for one a day or so later). The weather is still ideal. The Needles, crumpled, rugged masses of chalk-white rock, loom up

with an air of legend and tradition which I guess at but do not know: I should indeed be surprised if these rugged white rocks were not possessed of a legend.

We swing into the notorious Bay of Biscay. Many passengers turn white about the gills. There is no reason for it: the weather is ideal. You endeavour to instal yourself on deck. This is an ever-changing occupation, for a deck-installation never lasts long. Put the long deck-chair with the cushions here: no, over there; the other wicker chairs here with the little table. Some books and a rug. . . . Suppose we shift the whole lot once again, to a spot where the breeze is blowing or is not, according to whether you care about a breeze or not. A sea breeze caresses your cheeks with a heavy hand and blows through your shirt so that you shiver pleasantly.

You pretend to read, but it is a lazy sort of life. Nevertheless you are busy. You have letters to write, or your first impressions to jot down. You must go to the barber. How busy you are! Although you have enjoyed an ample breakfast, you must have some soup, a cup of chocolate, a cherry-brandy—the Company's little attentions for their passengers. In the morning you must see the sun rise, and in the evening see it set. And then you must have a look at the ship. Our amusing purser conducts us round. We see the cook's galley and pantry, so beautifully neat that I cannot resist teasing him, and ask: "Is it arranged like this for . . . the special correspondent of the *H.P.?*" No, no, this beautiful order and cleanliness is traditional. The provision master shows us the cold storage rooms where the snow is heaped up along the pipes. The refrigerating chambers remind one of an Alpine landscape. A prospect of slaughtered oxen, pigs, pink and red, hanging on hooks, confronts my spying gaze; have we got to eat all that? There are about six hundred mouths on board. A quantity of tins, little tins, bales of rice and sugar, potatoes, hundreds of cheeses, poultry, bunches of grapes.

It is phenomenal what the traveller considers

necessary to have whilst spending thirty days of his life on board a ship which carries him over the rippling waves. When shall we ever return to the simple life ? The wine cellars glow with rows of bottles before my astonished gaze ; no, we shall not return to the simple life just yet.

Two cats wander round about us in the hold full of stores ; they take care that there are no mice, and they terrify the rats. These two cats—special friends of the provision master—have to do their duty like everyone else on board ; they may have their own sunny spot on deck—I never see them there—but however ideal this late summer weather may be, you can never tempt these two cats to be lazy and to saturate their velvety bodies with the October summer sun. They hunt and sniff and spy after the rats and after the mice : their task is to take care that what is stored with such careful foresight for the hungry souls on board is not attacked in the very slightest degree by the nibbling vermin which they hunt : a prey which they are allowed to keep as reward.

II

Who has said that life on board ship is monotonous? There is endless variety—almost too much. You scarcely find a moment's time to recline in your chair. Early in the morning, as early as possible, your boy wakes you, you take your bath, which tastes salt on your lips. In your tub you can imagine yourself a triton. You breakfast on the upper deck in front of your cabin—and how delicious does the carefully-cut and sugared grapefruit taste, as you gaze dreamily across the blue sea. Another fancy comes to you: you are travelling in your own steam yacht, for everything is so smooth and placid and peaceful round about you at the moment. From fancy to fancy you arrive once more at reality: that the weather continues ideal and that the voyage is like a pleasure trip. But at ten o'clock you have an engagement. Did I not tell you that there was a lot to do? You dress hurriedly for the second time—for you were in pyjamas—and you see that you put on a suit that can stand a good deal. For your engagement is to visit the engine-room under the guidance of the chief engineer. The mighty, throbbing steel heart of the ship!

You descend the steel steps, you walk over the steel bars which form the floor. The two engines are functioning in a bewildering manner. It is no inanimate material, and you wonder—at least I did—naïvely, that there are men—are they not mechanical engineers?—who know how to bring this material to life—to mighty, pulsating life.

The chief engineer explains everything to us. But

you must not ask me to repeat it to you, and that in black-and-white. I should tell you very strange things! We poor authors are supposed to understand everything, and to write about everything! I am writing about an engine-room, through which I wandered for a couple of hours, but . . . I am not going to tell you anything about motors and electricity! It all remains a mystery to me, a myth of iron and steel, and stupidly I admire the powerful movements of the thick round bars, as they rise and fall violently: they are like the giant muscles of wicked, titan arms, which expand and contract with herculean movements.

We see the stokers at their hellish fires; they hurl the shovels-full into the gaping fiery mouth. They are Chinese, who work along with their foremen, in shifts. We see the giant axles and the steering-room. The steel heart, the iron soul of the ship, put into motion and called into life by mere human ingenuity. If the gods watch us carefully, they may well nod their heads in admiration of everything which our age has discovered and completed, in those things which are mechanical. It is the age of Hephestos. The penalty was paid by Beauty—that was Aphrodite, the wife of Hephestos, who was never at one with him.

You know, of course, that Zeus comforted Hephestos, who was ugly, with the promise that one day he should rule over the world, but at the cost of his wife, Beauty. The myth—if this is correct, and I have not invented it—is not entirely true. Hephestos has a beauty of his own with which Aphrodite has nothing to do. The engine-room of a ship has its own beauty which is, however, quite different from that of a woman or a goddess. Hephestos has a manly beauty of iron and steel, which is animated by the genius of our age, and whereby our age, in spite of much that is ugly, is great.

Enough of gods and of engine-rooms! We glide down the coast of Portugal, the long cliffs of San Vicente. Telescopes are directed towards the monastery—how well do monks know what points to select on which to

Shopping district, Medan.

Coaling station at Sabang.

build their monasteries !—to the fortress. I pay a visit to the Marconist. Wireless ! Yet another marvel of our century ! Or does it not seem wonderful to you ? I must admire, but I understand nothing whatever about it. And yet I have had the listening-in apparatus to my ears, and the listening-in cap on my head. Strange, atmospheric noises played round about me. It was as though squalling cats were flitting about in the air. But nothing was being transmitted. The Marconi man promised to warn me when a message came ; I am therefore prepared to know more about this miracle.

The spot in front of this wireless cabin I call the Villa Marconi. There we sit and lie, mornings, afternoons and evenings. I have veiled the electric light with a coloured piece of stuff, so that its brilliance is reduced. Here there is atmosphere. Our fellow-travellers, whom we have known for ten days and who already have friendly feelings towards us—you fraternize so quickly on board !—come and sit beside us. Our administrator plays one of his mandolines. He has three. He plays Grieg, Wagner, " William Tell," and then all kinds of old-fashioned romances and serenades. The moon rises, growing rounder and rounder every evening. Moonshine, a silver sea—a " level " sea is the seaman's term, because the sea looks as though it had been " levelled," but the sea is as good as it has ever been and by no means *Ozean du Ungeheur*. And with this melodious mandoline and trembling chords . . . really we are getting sentimental.

We have come to the Straits of Gibraltar. Excitement ! On board you always want to know where you are, and to see what there is to be seen. If you sail through a strait, you like to see the coast on both sides. That night we glide through the Pillars of Hercules, but however much we peer we do not see these pillars, for they are only to be seen with the eye of tradition and in the imagination : but how clearly those eyes see at times ! There to the south glimmer Tangiers, and Melilla. . . . Visions of white African towns. . . . The weather is now growing hazy ; the early morning mist stretches a thin

veil over sky and water. We are now between Spain and the Balearic Isles. The morning sheds its radiance over the blue sea and the blue coast. As we have been steaming along so fast, the captain allows the passengers the pleasure of sailing quite close to the land. The Baie des Anges, Antibes, Nice—I recognise Cimiez and the big hotels, then the Rocher de Monaco and Monte Carlo. I lived there for years, in Nice, because of the white and golden weather only, for I never played roulette and never shot pigeons—two passions which are lacking in me.

The captain invites us to come up on to the bridge—a standing invitation. It is all like a pleasure trip on one's own yacht. It seems to me that the French boats, which years ago I used to take to and from the Indies, had broader promenade decks, but there is something very delightful about the construction of the *Prins der Nederlanden*, although she is not so imposing. The scalloped outline of the maritime Alps stands out against the sky. Mountain blue against sky blue, azure against azure, sapphire against turquoise. It is like paradise, so much blue! Mentone and San Remo and all the little white and sapphire speckled towns and villages, with their clock towers, of the Ligurian Riviera, the "Ponente." Then Genoa looms into our vision, its "palazzi"—a palazzo is not always what we call a palace—piled up majestically on the slope of the hills. We glide into the harbour in slow state. A majestic arrival, whilst the graceful movements of the great ship are regulated by repeated commands from the bridge.

In the afternoon we go ashore. Genoa strikes me again as always, on account of its grandeur, its massive buildings, its great lines and powerful forms. How weak does modern architecture seem in comparison! Our age can make machines, but it cannot build. During the centuries that Genoa came into being the people knew how to build in various styles. Across all this flutters Italian picturesqueness in the shape of the washing hung out, rich with colour as though artists had put it there as a decoration.

The next day, a brilliant October day ; the summer which will not die, the summer which still exults in its brilliant will-power. A motor-trip is arranged to Portofino and Rapallo but . . . is it not too far ? Shall we, if we lunch at the Kulm (why a German name in Italy ?) get back in time ? Just imagine if the *Prins der Nederlanden* were to steam away without us ? No need to worry ! The captain is going to accompany us. Very well then, everything is safe, for without her captain the *Prins* will not seek the briny ocean.

Our Consul-General at Genoa orders the motors. It is all very convenient. Our trip to Nervi and Portofino and up past Santa Margarita to Rapallo is an unforgettable one. Distant views over land and sea gleam blue through the green of pines and cypresses. The abundant foliage of dark pines is silhouetted against the azure, the cypresses look darker still with their stern, serene monumental cones. Sickle-leafed eucalyptus trees scent the air. Yellowing autumn sprays of vine festoon the hills. Berries gleam everywhere. The strawberry plants glow with their orange-purple autumn fruit, which are not really strawberries although they are given this name.

The valleys and dales and the bays in among the hills are like goblets filled with sunshine. It is a classical landscape—How northern, in comparison, is Liguria ! The women, whom we see, are sometimes fair although they are Italians. The youths, bathing in the sea or with bared breast and arms on their little carts, or at work, are often like antique statues. Everywhere amazingly beautiful people, in an amazingly beautiful country.

Italy. . . ! With something akin to homesickness I feel what I have missed for seven years. Italy . . . in a couple of hours I shall be leaving again that beloved land, and it is as if one is caught in chains, although one has not been there for some years and is going away so soon.

We are back on board. In the evening, the lights

glimmer over the town with its palazzi-scattered slopes, and the stars glimmer in the wide, clear sky.

Yet another day at sea. The ghost of Elba flits by; later the lovely sunlit white rocky mass of Volturno and Garigliano, the Pozza Islands. Bare and gleaming, gliding up like immense diamonds.

There will be more excitement to-night. We shall pass Stromboli at about two o'clock, and if Stromboli's mysterious forces roar and blaze in the bosom of its crater, a red glow will hover over its flat, truncated cone all night long. But Stromboli slumbers and there is no red glow to be seen. It does not matter. The excitement goes on just the same. Nobody sleeps much, everyone is in more or less fantastic night garb on the upper deck, for we are nearing the Straits of Messina.

The Straits are both famous and notorious—famous for their beauty, with something of the grace and supple lines of Amphitrite herself: about its lap and bosom are the slow movements as of Siren arms. Notorious, because of Scylla and Charybdis, whirlpool and reef transformed into alarming myths by the sailor, evil forces always; notorious also for the disaster of more than ten years ago, when Messina with its Palazzata—its front of palaces—seemed to crumble away for ever to a heap of ruins. Now, however, in the early morning, its lights gleam once more; the people of Messina would not desert their unlucky town, and built it up again as well as they could. The lights are extinguished one by one as the sun rises, bursting, faintly red and tender orange, through the last morning mist.

A schooner in full sail, white and pink, like a ship full of illusions and youth, rises like a phantom shape in front of our eyes.

We have passed through the Straits of Messina.

III

The weather is something of an enigma. The Bay of Biscay, of tempestuous reputation, was as smooth as a pond; the sea to the south of Crete, which is always feared on account of its ground-swell by those who are sensitive to the motion of the briny, was calmer than any lake, and my stock of metaphor, therefore, fails me; now that we are nearing Port Said, it is colder than it was in the Canal, and the sea is sprinkled with white horses. What a sense of mythology is given by the sea here! Is it because of the silhouette of Crete, where we visualise Mount Ida, whilst we remember that Zeus, in the form of a bull, carried off Europa, the king's daughter, on his back right through the waves. Is it because of the proximity of Cyprus—proximity is a relative term, of course—where we know that Aphrodite was born from the foam of the waves? This sea is mythological, the white surf tips are like the heads of the rising horses of Poseidon, whose fore-hoofs beat the waters, and whose hind-quarters end in dashing fishes' tails, and thousands of these merry, grey horses populate the wide domain of the sea-god, melting into the horizon.

There is once more excitement on board, on account of a trip to Cairo, which the passengers were to make from Port Said, where we are due to-morrow early. Down by the Sphinx and the Pyramids to Suez, to pick up the boat once more there. But to spend ten hours in the train and six hours motoring in one day in order to see Cairo and the Sphinx between lunch and tea did not attract me, and I had decided not to make one of the

party. There was, however, a wireless message to the effect that the trip could not be carried out as no trains run on Sunday in Egypt. This was disappointing for a good many people who were hankering after the Pyramids and the Sphinx; but now we shall be able to do a little shopping in Port Said and then go quietly through the Suez Canal.

Certainly we must shop, for the second excitement is on account of the Indian Ocean Festivities, for which a committee is being formed. The special correspondent of the *Haagsche Post* has been appointed chairman.

We have visited Port Said, which disappointed me very much after not having seen it for more than twenty years. Then it was Port Said, the Port of Said, still full of local colour. At that time there were still the Arab quarters and markets; horribly dirty fruit stalls were especially beautiful—in those days white "gandourahs" (shirts) and red tarbouches might be seen everywhere; there was a good deal of Arabian noise, and the fellah-women were walking about in their black tunics and veils, with copper or gold clasps between the eyes, keeping their veils in place, over forehead and nose. This time I did not see any of these things or the hundreds of begging children, with flies about their sore eyes. It all seemed more hygienic, as if everything had been wiped out, the beautiful as well as the dirty, the filth as well as the picturesque. Only the coal-proas floating along with their coal-heavers were beautiful; toiling Arabs, singing rhythmically amidst clouds of black coal dust, hauled at the ropes, to moor their craft firmly to the steamer, then, shovelling their coal into sacks which they bore on their backs across the gangway, they poured it into the poop in the hold. Like a Moloch the ship swallowed up sack after sack; the air was filled with dust, and the dusky, singing toilers were indeed a picture in black against the blue of sky and sea.

We shopped in Port Said and bought the prizes for our festivities on board. The shops in Algiers and the souks in Tunis are better calculated to allure the passing

foreigner than the shops in Port Said. Having arrived early in the morning, we steamed into the Suez Canal a few hours later. It was very striking to see the encampments of English and Hindu soldiers and the heaped-up stores, which were lying there to rot after the war, as though in useless emporia under the open sky. Reflections on the horizon—are they trees, land or water? —made us wonder whether we were looking at a mirage. All the ship's officers were of the opinion that it was a mirage; the pilot, however, decided that it was land, a lake and trees. . . . Which of them was making a mistake? Presumably the pilot knew, but life is indeed deceptive for him who would pierce its horizon.

The night was marvellous, for there was a full moon in the clear, smooth sky, above clear, smooth water. A full moon always fills me with the wonder of things, a full moon prepares me for strange happenings, which might take place in the enchantment of soul and body. From the bridge we could see an occasional seagull flying right through the radiance of the spreading searchlight in front of the ship, white as the whitest dove in that white radiance; moonlight and searchlight, here a signal, there the light of a star, the radiance of the skies, the glow of lanterns, that which is wrought by the gods and that which men imitate. The stillness on the bridge is only broken now and then by our pilot's orders and the captain's words of caution, as we sail past the beacons. We glide into the Lake of Ismailia, the waters widen, the lights of the little Arab town flicker . . . then we pass through the narrow canal to the Bitter Lake.

As we pass from the Gulf of Suez into the Red Sea—a suffocating heat envelops us. Now the weather is no longer strange or wonderful—it is merely stiflingly hot. The Red Sea lives up to its reputation. I never pay much attention to figures, but I believe the temperature rises to 86° Fahrenheit; white clothing makes its appearance. You would like to wear nothing at all and not to come out of your berth. And yet during these days our festivities take place as though the passengers wished to

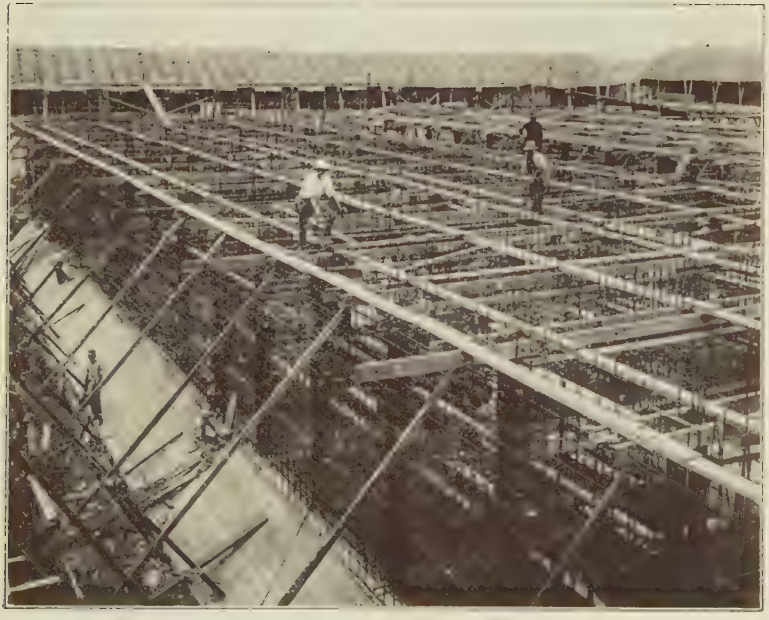
forget how hot it is. The children's sports—tugs-of-war, etc.—are a great success, and so are the sports for the grown-ups. There is a pleasant, cheerful atmosphere, in spite of the tropical heat. It seems that the voyage out from Holland to the Dutch Indies is always more lively than that back to Holland. The people now are almost all young and still full of illusions : coming home, many are ill and nervous, often with shattered health and illusions.

I take the opportunity of having a chat here and there ; the men of Deli have already told me how much they appreciate the fact that a correspondent of a great paper is being sent to India.[1] In general there is a good deal of complaining about the small amount of interest that the Dutch take in their colonies. Are there really so few young Dutchmen who are willing to seek a career round about the Equator, that, for instance, it was necessary to send out quite a number of young Danes as military dispensers ? They wear the Dutch uniform and study the language most assiduously, and they appear to be well educated and have pleasant manners. Some of them have brought their young wives—at the cabaret night which I arranged they gave us a " Dansk Ensemble." All the same, it seems curious that none of our Dutch young men can be found to fill these vacancies. Everyone tells me that the young Dutchman would rather seek a position in Holland than go so far away from home to the unknown colonies, where none of his people have ever been. It is a family matter—if one sheep crosses the bridge, the rest will surely follow.

In my case it was quite different. I was the exception in my own family. I was always surrounded with the distant fragrance of fruit and flowers, and an interest in everything that belonged to our colonies. I have often noticed that many Dutchmen despise to a certain extent everything that comes from India, and this attitude

[1] The Dutch always refer to their colonies as " India."

Hotel Brastagi.



Caisson-reinforcing harbour works at Belawan.

can only have its origin in ignorance. For is it not wonderful that our country, our small nation, has sought and found, far away from hearth and home, this great Oriental land at the other end of the world? The sea route thither was a secret. Remember Valentyn's tales of travel, remember the bold deeds of the Houtman Brothers, and let us once more be proud of what we may have forgotten because centuries of former greatness and a later period of inaction swamped them. Have we not the right to pride ourselves on our supremacy over the Portuguese, who were older seamen, but not such tactful merchants as were the splendid men of our Dutch East India Company, which was then still in its prime?

It is indeed marvellous to think of what we accomplished in those days. The gods grant every country its heroic epoch—the Portuguese had theirs and we also received the great gift of glorious years. Perhaps they are over now. Not for a second time do the gods bestow such brilliant favours, either to a mortal or to a people. But let us rest on our laurels in these latter years—they are not discreditable to a Dutchman, when we see how at the present time our statesmen are honoured and sought; do not let us forget that, though we may never again be what we were, we still have much and that our significance is great, and I should like this claim to be maintained, not too imperialistically.

Times change: new ideas blossom forth in an orchard of modern intellect. But even without any extensive imperialism, those in the Motherland could take an interest in and seek the noble lands which lie so far from our own country and are yet so near to many hearts. We are tied to India with unbreakable bonds, and it would indeed be a disaster to Holland and India if these were broken. Our competitors of to-day should show in different ways their love and devotion towards a country which to many must seem like a strange, rather alarming, myth. India is not a myth and not a nightmare, and every Dutchman—even he who cherishes no Indian tradition in his bosom—would do well to cultivate

a more intense interest in the so often Unknown Land, over there. . . .

Or . . .

My thought remained unfinished. As I stood and gazed across the sea, wrapped in silver moonlight, I could not finish this sentence. A sea between Arabia and Egypt, between sands on the one side and sands on the other, a sea over which hover the vapours of many legends, with deserts on the one side, deserts on the other, whilst the dim stars seemed to grow dimmer in a mystery-charged sky. . . .

IV

THERE was some excitement that evening on account of the K.4, which we overtook in the Red Sea. She is one of our smart submarines, whose praises we had already heard sung in Algiers. *Comment vos marins hollandais traverseront l'océan immense avec ces petits-la.* Our captain invited the officers of the K.4 on board the *Prins* for a glass of beer, but they thought it was too dark to leave their precious treasure of a ship, and, whilst the young naval officers who were with us sang the "Wilhelmus,"[1] we once more lost the K.4 from sight, not without a short thrill of spontaneous patriotism.

I experienced another emotion near Cape Guardafui. I was gazing at the often ill-omened cape with a sailor, who is a poet, and in whose blue eyes I often read the love of his sea. We gazed; the sea was so calm, indeed, it seemed as if soft blue silken fabrics were being spread out by white siren hands, or as if blue nets were being woven, the meshes of which we saw coming one after another. And behind it lay like an idyll an undulating down, and behind that again a steep mountain, not a range of mountains, bold in outline, but the undulating down that was Cape Guardafui. An Arabian felucca, with a wide square sail, glides away like a ship full of dreams . . . and behind all this silent poetry lurks danger, when the winds and the seas fight. The mighty winds wage war on the seas, for the waters desire only peace and bliss, but the unfettered winds desire raging

[1] The Dutch National Anthem.

passion and torture their ocean-love, who resists them with all her waves.

Danger lurks there in a host of reefs, submerged by angry waves or still waters. Forty years ago my own sister was shipwrecked on that undulating down, on that smooth, serene yellow down. She was flung down in a crazy little boat over rocks and reefs, she, her husband and child; and her second child was born there!

Gazing at that calm, idyllic down, which is Cape Guardafui, I thought of my sister. She was rescued and lived for many years. Now she is no longer alive. As I gazed in that morning hour I felt as if a link were being forged between our existences, a link of strange memories and undying sympathy.

Do you see those flying fish? They are swarming over the water like little white butterflies. They dive up, they skim across the water, they look like white streaks of lightning, like silver darts, like arrows, playfully flung by tritons; they dive back again into the wide blue basin of scarcely-moving water. . . .

You must have heard of that sailor who back on shore told his old mother all sorts of tales, as a man who comes from foreign parts does. She believed all her son's vividly-coloured, fantastic lies, but when he began to tell her about flying fishes, then she would no longer believe and chided him for telling her such wicked lies. . . .

Do you see the flying fish, there, and over there . . . and over there?

We touched at Colombo. I remember as a child in the *Prins Hendrik* (it was in 1872) having come to anchor at Point de Galles. A bay strewn with little islands as though numbers of bouquets had been scattered about. I imagine that these bouquets were a danger to shipping, as for many years the Port de Galles has been avoided by the mailboats.

At Colombo, after an English tiffin with chutney in the Oriental Hotel, and having exchanged some Dutch money for rupees, we went shopping. Wandering about

the Chinese and Cingalese quarters, the native population as they crowded about us passengers made an unpleasant impression on me: they press round you and try to sell all sorts of things: stamps and white sapphires (these inexpensive precious stones of Ceylon are known to all travellers), ivory elephants in various sizes, lace covers. All this is done in an unpleasant way which you would not have expected from Buddists—are they not Buddhists? It would be in vain to try to make such a tiresome crowd understand that a salesman must be before everything a psychologist and understand the art of penetrating into the soul of his victim, and of knowing whether he has a desire for white sapphires or little elephants or for neither.

I was not sufficiently versed in that epoch of our national history which is the period of our Dutch rule in Ceylon to bemoan the fact of our having lost Ceylon. I was very much struck, however, by the fact that the antique houses in the Chinese and Cingalese native quarters, very picturesque among the coconut and date palms and blossoming trees—gigantic trees with a pure, wealth of flowers—displayed the same old-world Dutch colonial manner of building which may be found in similar houses in India. With their pillars and their low sloping roofs, they lie tucked away in a wealth of green. Such a house is indeed picturesque, especially when the little door is ajar, giving a glimpse into a dark interior alive with bits of vivid colour. I cannot remember seeing in Java the façade and window-panes and the verandahs of finely-sculptured and carved wood. They struck me as being typical of Ceylon.

Then, in a pious frame of mind, we went to visit the old Dutch church, where many Dutchmen of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries lie buried. A charming church, still bearing witness to the old spirit of patriotism. The Buddha temple, with the gigantic recumbent figure of Buddha decorated in many colours, did not strike me as beautiful. Both temple and figure lack, in my opinion, the inspiration of their artist. Yet it was nice to see the

flowers, large fragrant blossoms—I do not know them by name—which lay spread as offerings in front of the great thinker.

The voyage is nearly at an end. To-morrow we shall be at Sabang. Is it possible ? There is a certain sadness about travelling. Each day a little, a very little, dies of what we have learned to love. A sea voyage when the weather is fine and the people on board show their best side to one another is but an incident in one's life, but an incident in our life counts sometimes. I think all my fellow passengers will number the voyage on the *Prins de Nederlanden* among the happiest incidents in their lives.

It all passes so quickly—so quickly—and my pen cannot keep up with what my eyes see and my mind tries to retain. The voyage was a rest. On but one the last day we are steaming to Sabang—for we shall go ashore at Belawar (Deli)—and then the work for which I went will begin.

Many officials and officers on board will be told where they are to be stationed. Just imagine, you who are not an official, what a strange blank there must be in the minds of those men who are travelling they know not whither. But they are all accustomed to such decrees of fate, as administered by the authorities—they very rarely grumble. Even at Sabang they will not all be told where they have to betake themselves. A couple of Danish dispensers have got to land, so presumably they will be stationed in Atjeh.

I do not know the reason, but something in this ending to the voyage saddens me. Meanwhile we have been admiring the blue silhouettes of Poeloe Beras and Poeloe Wei. Sabang is the capital of the latter ; the Island of the Wind. It always seems to be blowing there, as the name Wei (Dutch word, *Waaien*—to blow) seems to indicate. At least so the sailors say.

The shores are green and golden. The new, prosperous harbour-town, with its black coal-shed, is very striking. It shows what energy and European effort

can do in a country and climate destined by the gods for dreamy sloth and idleness.

We come to anchor in Sabang, and for the first time I set foot in Sumatra.

First of all there is the landing-stage, then a path between the black heaps of coal; after that, quite unexpectedly, the golden trees, tropical beauty of the coco-nut palms, after a fall of rain. . . . Over the hills there is a stretch of mysterious virgin forest. It is not blowing at all; where is the wind of Poeloe-Wei?

This is the land of Sumatra, and I have never been here before.

Sumatra! There, behind the hills lies Atjeh, the land where we fought for years. Everybody on board has been saying to me: "What a pity that you do not go and see it?" I should like very much to go there, but it is not possible on such an extensive tour to visit every spot which might be of interest. Nevertheless, as we steamed past the distant blue coast, I felt something of remorse.

Sabang! . . . do you know that about twenty years ago this seaport town was nothing but virgin forest? During the Russo-Japanese War the situation of this island attracted the attention of the Powers, especially England. . . . At that time there was nothing but a small settlement. But General van Heutz drew the attention of the Government to this spot, so pre-eminently suitable as a strategical point that the Powers were roused to envy.

The limited liability company, Zeehaven en Kolen-station Sabang, was instituted. The co-operation of the Government was acquired, but Sabang was to be a private port and a free port as well. Where nothing grew but primeval forest, and where the eyes of tigers gleamed amongst the alang-alang—tall, wild grass—the axe was wielded and wielded again and again. Nature and man waged an unceasing war, and who shall say which of them was right? Do we ever know who is right, when two are fighting? European effort conquered.

Steam colliers which were needed for the bunkering of coal arose, with their hyper-modern iron silhouettes, displaying cranes and machinery against the tropical azure of the sky. The effect is strange, as it must be. Every Western line, every Western being, whether of flesh or steel, looks strange in this Eastern atmosphere, which the West, consciously or unconsciously, means to conquer. If for an instant we become children of Nature, we may bemoan that what has grown for ages wild and untramelled should be subdued. Then, again, as children of Western culture, fighting for ideals, we cannot do otherwise than admire this new seaport town : Sabang, the wonderful result of European effort, on the Island of the Winds, on the furthest point of Sumatra.

V

As soon as I reached Sabang, a note was handed to me from the Governor of East Sumatra, residing at Medan, in which my wife and I received the most cordial welcome, and even an invitation to come and stay. Indian hospitality has remained just the same, and still maintains its old reputation.

The courtliness of our Dutch-Indian officials has never departed from its great traditions. I recollect the courtliness which in this position has become an art of good breeding, from twenty years ago, and it struck me again on first putting foot in Sumatra.

Let us linger a while at Sabang. Let us motor amongst the fresh, green and gold luxuriance—mango trees, nangka trees, heavily weighted with great luscious fruits —to the little crater lake, which lies yonder amongst the hills, and invites one to bathe. When we return to dine we find an invitation from Baron van Aerssen Beyeren, Chief Administrator of the Sabang Company.

Now for the first time I see the new type of Dutch-Indian houses. The old type has always a verandah, back and front, both with their six pillars and connected by a slanting middle-verandah—generally dark—from which the bedrooms lead. Modern Indian people no longer care for this type. I am still undecided as to whether they are right, and have been here as yet too short a time to have made up my mind. The modern Indian house is built in a more airy villa style, with a storey above and therefore a staircase. The front verandah, as it is still called, is more like a hall, through which you can see,

though it is not quite open. It is more private, but I wonder if it is not also more stuffy. I am told that this breathless evening is quite an exception. There is nearly always a wind in Sabang and over the little green island. Perhaps, therefore, it is better to shut off as much as possible from the all-penetrating element this roomy white hall where there are no curtains and where furniture is scarce. Even the back verandah where we have our meals is more shut in than in the old type of house.

When one has not been in India for twenty years one is greatly struck by this new type of house. The first men of the Company in India built the closed Amsterdam type of house, such as may still be seen in the old town of Batavia. Then our later forefathers built the roomy, open, and now old-fashioned house with pillars and a low, sloping roof; present-day people returned to the one-storied house, a more shut-in and private sort of dwelling.

I gathered from the conversation at that very enjoyable meal the great importance of Sabang, this new seaport town! Since it and its coaling station were founded with the co-operation of the Government the great ships of the big companies all laid up at its jetties. Foreign lines followed this example. Sabang grew more and more important. The ships had to be loaded and unloaded; numbers of people were required and the inhabitants of the island of Nias, situated on the west coast of Sumatra, were the people principally employed. Encampments were built. Would it be necessary in future to take Deli tobacco to Batavia to be exported? No, it would be taken straight from Deli to Sabang.

But the harbour works which have been started at Belawan, the port of Medan, the capital of Deli, will, in the not-too-distant future, ensure for the Deli enterprises a port of their own, and in all probability Sabang will feel the consequences of this. Sabang is the only private port and free port which is not at the same time a Government port. Singapore, which is also a free port, does not possess steam colliers. Sabang, on the other hand, is

adapted for the most modern system of coal transport. But the older systems also remain in use because older ships cannot always take what the steam transports serve out to them.

I can still see the dry dock where the Government dredger *Sumatra* lies at anchor for repair ; the works where repairs to ships are carried out and where also machinery, and even smaller ships are built.

And as I see all this and grasp that all this complex of Western twentieth-century culture has come about in no more than a score of years, then I repeat :

This is Western effort at the furthermost point of Sumatra, on the Island of Wei, in spite of the Eastern climate and the Eastern atmosphere, in spite of the virgin forest, through the prairie grass in which now no large, lithe tiger-cats prowl and glare with burning eyes. The child of Nature may regret the wild beasts, but the child of civilisation can but admire the gigantic effort and the result that rises before his eyes.

The day after our visit to Sabang our voyage was at an end. We had got to leave the *Prins de Nederlanden*, and not without a cordial word of farewell to so many with whom we had lived for a month in close proximity, on a continuously calm sea.

SECOND PART

SUMATRA

I

We have already for some days been the guests of the Governor of Eastern Sumatra and his wife. The impressions that I was able to gain under the guidance and instruction of my host were extraordinarily numerous. I shall make an attempt to classify them in my memory and then to put them into words. It is the beginning of the rainy season. No blue sky, no uncompromising azure. Instead, a low, grey sky, filled with the collected treasure of the rains, which are good for Nature and man and for all that pertains to them. A damp mist drifts around; there is never a drizzle.

It would seem that the rain gods of the East regulate the fall of the beneficial waters better than those of the Western skies. It rains, as rain it should in this season of the year, when Nature and men expect that it shall rain. It pours down from the skies; the monsoon gods empty their cans and buckets. Sheets of white rain, rigid floods of rain, never driven aslant by the wind. Everything is dripping. The rivers swell and dash onwards; earth and grass are drenched; the trees, the plants, breathing anew, absorb with branches, roots, with every leaf and fibre, the abundant blessing of water. There is more than enough; there is superabundance, as there always is, in the East. It rains for an hour, it rains for hours. The sun does not always come through at once, for the rain-gods up there are ever zealously collecting fresh supplies, they fill their grey clouds, they fill their cans and buckets; when they are ready, they will once more lean down over the insatiable earth, emptying their

cans and buckets, empty out and pour down their white torrents of rain.

These rains are an epic phenomenon of Nature. It is no drizzling melancholy like that of northern shores ; it is wealth falling from the sky into a world which otherwise would be in danger of impoverishment. The moment of its renewed opulence is fitly chosen by the gods, and starts somewhat earlier in Sumatra than in Java—I recollect very well that the first day of the rains in the eastern portion was fixed by the cloud gods for December 5th. In Deli, the blessed hour falls in October. The fresh white town, as Medan is, with its elegant white buildings and villa quarters, lies as though beneath a spray. It is never dirty as Western rains can make a town, and even Nature itself. Here there is no offensive town mud, it is just watered earth.

The foliage of the coconut palm, the feathery needles of the tamarisk, the broad, satiny, paddle-shaped leaves of bananas, everything has grown an intense green, as if gold is lurking beneath the foliage. The cicadas in the trees chirp their ceaseless songs of joy. The crickets below fiddle on their glad, shrill violins. The flowers—pink and red hibiscus, and sweetly-scented yellow oleanders—droop, but as soon as the rain stops fresh buds will open out their petals so that there shall be no death and withering. For the gods, who control these movements in Nature, are life-giving gods.

Whenever the pajong—sunshade—symbol of authority, gold, gold and white, silver and white, green and white, open or closed, carried by a servant behind or above the head of an official is done away with, something of his glory is banished. Was the custom ever understood or honoured by the Javanese in Java ? In Sumatra, the sunshade was never carried behind an official or regent as a symbol of glory. The importance which surrounds a high official in Deli has remained much the same as it always was. A palace, such as the one in which the Governor of the East Coast of Sumatra resides at Medan, is a majestic building, of which a Dutchman who has never

visited the outlying districts—in modern times people no longer speak of " estates " but of " districts "—mark well the fine distinction !—and the outlying districts are those which lie outside Java itself—can have no conception.

Medan is a white town in the midst of green trees and beautifully-kept green lawns. And in its park the two-storied palace is tucked away—yes, I call it a palace, and it is no exaggeration—amongst tjemara, ficus, palm and tamarind trees. It has a spacious dignity, magnificent and always ready for official receptions, with its portico through which our car drives, with its two parallel front verandahs supported by pillars, whilst the centre one leads like a wide hall to the very extensive verandah at the back, which quite open and spacious within its pillars makes, notwithstanding these dimensions, a very comfortable living-room, although an ordinary Dutch house could quite easily dance a two-step with another similar house inside it. Perhaps I exaggerate. Very well, but it is only possible to conjure up a picture of these royal proportions for my compatriots who do not know India, by means of an occasional exaggeration.

On either side of the central verandah are situated the sitting-rooms and offices. This beautiful house is not more than twenty years old. What concerns us —the visitors' apartments—are, as is often the case in the residences in India, a separate pavilion (such is the term). A covered open passage leads there from the back verandah. They are very spacious rooms : bed-rooms, sitting-rooms, verandah, bathroom—the latter as big as an average drawing-room—and the guest can if he likes keep entirely in his own quarters so that he is not too much of an incubus to his host and hostess.

The outbuildings are lost behind a hedge of Chinese bamboo and blossoming hibiscus. The Deli River, swollen by the rain, flows through the garden, glimmering in the moonshine. A few deer wander in the park, around its banks. A parrot calls aloud all sorts of sweet words, but when there is no reply it gets angry. Nevertheless, it

never scolds, knowing that a Government "Polly" must exercise restraint. A few servants, not as many as I recollect in the olden days in suchlike houses—is it on account of the dearth of servants?—glide by on silent, bare feet and do their work or attend to you with unhurried grace, in the stately manner which good Javanese servants—they are Javanese here at this house—always maintain in such surroundings. You do not hear them, they are scarcely seen, and not only is everything always thought out, attended to and done, but . . . an official reception might take place within an hour.

I admire these signs of dignity in the life of our high officials and they were no surprise to me; years ago I remember them in the Residencies of Java. Our democratic times do not seem to have entirely wiped out every bit of dignity and beauty from the art of living. A couple of police officers are always seated in the verandah next to the Governor's office. They rise as a guest passes, going from the pavilion to the back verandah. Formerly a flagstaff stood in the garden in front; the flag now waves from the roof.

I should like in these pages to be able to give a sketch of the big men whom I met in India. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to describe my host. But I am afraid of being presumptuous, and, moreover, so much has already been written about Mr. Westenenk. This official, who speaks the flowery Malay tongue with the greatest facility, who has so intimately gauged the Malay soul, who, although he began in Borneo as a controller, spent the whole of the rest of his official career, until he attained the high position of the Governorship of the east coast of Sumatra itself, and for whose profound knowledge and love, the districts of Bengkoelen, Palembang, Padang, and Deli, contain no secrets, was offered, in 1914, the Inspector-Generalship of Anatolia, Armenia. He was already at Constantinople, in deliberation with the Cabinet Council, with Enver Pasha and the Turkish authorities, taking diametrically opposite views to them on the question of the equality of Mussulman and Christian,

when the War broke out and put a stop to this high appointment, offered to him in preference to other neutral candidates.

Mr. Westenenk was already on the point of going off to Erzeroum. I respect the modesty of my host. It is not the place here to enlarge upon this honour for our country when a Dutchman was requested by Russia and the other powers to settle the thorny Armenian question. I will, however, only add here that when Mr. Westenenk tells me about Sumatra I am absolutely enthralled and the hours fly. The life of an East Indian high official is an extraordinarily busy one, both on account of administrative and representative affairs, and I appreciate it all the more that my host makes time now and again to supply some information to his inquisitive guest.

Sumatra! . . . I should have to stay here a year at least in order to understand at all Sumatra's past or present ; this I feel very strongly as I listen to Mr. Westenenk. I am staying here only three weeks What can I see in so short a time, and what can I tell you in so short a time of what I saw ? I am at Medan, and it is the chief town for the various centres of enterprise : oil, rubber, tobacco, tea, oil palm, fibre and coffee. Here may be seen that European effort which shows such tremendous results. I hope to be able to tell you of the harbour works of Belawan ; I hope to tell you of all that the Westerner hopes to do here, and does. But, for the moment, I see Sumatra still as primeval country, as the island of antiquity, whose past stretches back beyond the legends of Alexander the Great, the forefather of all Malay princes, who name him Iskander Dsoelkarnain, the two-horned one, to the distant ages, when from India, pre-Indian races moved through the Straits down the Malay Peninsula and established themselves in Sumatra, where one does not expect to have to deal with Aborigines.

These ancient races which, before the Arian domination, fled to Cambodia, brought, by way of the land where Bangkok arose later, pre-Indian culture of the most ancient times to the east coast of Sumatra and to Java. The

Sumatran Battas are descended from these "Negritos"—according to Mr. Westenenk, little woolly-haired, black creatures, and cannibals. These negritos had tattooed faces such as may still be seen on the Hindu of Deli. There are two Hindu temples in Deli, which we are to go and see, and which are served by Brahmins, tattooed with symbolical signs in red, green, and white, on head and breast.

Whilst my host is telling me these things of which he has gained such a deep and intimate knowledge, and upon which I can only touch, but which may be read in learned pamphlets written by Mr. Westenenk, the evening falls. We had not noticed it, sitting outside with our whiskies-and-soda beside us. There is a thud which makes us start; it is a pole-cat, darting from the branches of a tree on to its invisible prey. The parrot screeches. Night has fallen. Lofty banyan and mango trees are darkly outlined against the mysterious, pale sky. A great toad which springs into the house and takes up its position behind some furniture utters a cry and calls out, "More rain!" He predicts more rain; up there the water-gods are busy filling their water-bags. It is one of those mysterious, Indian monsoon evenings. No stars. A sultry oppression. A close feeling of mystery. Then suddenly the heavy perfume of incense "doepa." It is Thursday evening, and on this day incense is always burnt in preparation for Friday, which is the holy day of the week.

"I don't like this smell," says Mr. Westenenk. "It reminds me too much of the time at Fort-de-Kock, when there was an outbreak in Padang of religious mania, and I, as controller, saw the mad crowd swathed in white dancing towards me in the moonlight, crying aloud, 'Laillah Allah,' their convulsive fingers ready to tear anything to pieces!" The smell of the incense is almost overpowering. Everything is still, almost hallowed, and full of weird mystery. This is the Indian evening, which falls and shrouds the great, white palace. Around us lies the town in the peace of evening, here and there gleam

Batta Kampong.

Batta Kampong.

the lights of villas. In front of us, down the road, rattle the last carts, like little houses covered with palm leaves, drawn by oxen.

This is the Indian evening, and the great fox-bat hovers like a demon close above our heads. Over there, in the town, lies the Hôtel de Boer, a complex of white buildings. A glitter of electric light, tables spread, merriment and fun. It is "hari-besar"; the coolies are being paid and are allowed off for the evening; the planters have gone to the town and are dining with their womenfolk. No signs of the Indian evening there; it is like a moment from the European world.

The evening spreads its mystery over the town, the river, the lovely palm avenue of Belawan, and the road between the teak-trees to Padang-Boelan. And I feel it as I felt it as a child, inscrutable, unsolvable as a riddle, closely veiled as an unapproachable divinity, hovering o'er us. . . . And then my host tells me of the orang-boenian. They are female ghosts who sometimes wed with human beings. And of the orang-aloes, those translucent beings, delicate spectres floating in the air. . . . Then, at nine o'clock, dinner is announced. The big toad hops inside—do you see that bold one springing over the great marble stones, unmolested? The little lizards upon the ceiling call out their love song the one to the other, man and wife: "Tjoe! tjoe!" "Tjokok!" cries the toad, predicting rain, more rain! Sparrows, ready for slumber, nestle in the capital of a pillar. The servants appear in all their stateliness with dishes and plates as though for a ceremony.

II

MEDAN is a new town, with cool white buildings, situated in the midst of cool, green fields, which has in the first place to thank the busy plantation industry for its prosperity. It is quite unique in our Indian possessions; you will never find its like elsewhere, either in Sumatra or in Java. It is modern and European; there is a touch of England about it, and there is no doubt that the proximity of Singapore has had an influence upon Medan. The "White Club," the Post Office, the Town Hall, and the Java Bank, Hôtel de Boer and Medan Hotel, the imposing offices of various companies: Harrison and Crossfield, Deli Maatshappij, Deli Proefstation, Deli Railway Company, the firm of Van Nie and Co., they all lie there amongst the extraordinarily fresh green of the rain-washed palms, fig-trees, and tjemaras; great white buildings, breathing prosperity, and telling of profitable work, and of admirable Western effort.

And yet, at the moment, there is a feeling of depression hanging over everything; the feeling of depression is not only in the air, it may now be heard in an undertone at first subdued then breaking into a bitter, sorrowful noise which dominates everything. Depression, more especially for us rubber folk! moan the rubber planters, whose estates in the neighbourhood have been for the time being brought to standstill. But these lamentations do not alter the fact that the tourist—and what am I but a tourist, who am writing for possible future tourists?—

is conscious of no other impression than that of prosperity, wealth, freshness and youthful power. Tennis is played a great deal, and what strikes one as rather humorous is that football is being taken up by the young Malays, who, in the midst of their own language, call out the recognised terms of the noble game of football with a comical English accent.

Plantation Administrators of the tobacco, rubber, and palm-oil concerns, inspectors and young assistants, may be seen in the " hari besars " on high days and holidays in Medan ; we shall also see them on the concerns themselves. They are all of a healthy, energetic, robust type. Even if the Administrator from the very nature of things is somewhat dignified in his more mature proportions, the inspector, who has to inspect eight or nine concerns a week—hail to the motor, which has made this possible —can, if he is a keen, brisk fellow, attain this high rank while he is still quite young ; the assistants are represented by the quite youthful in the community of planters. Their mentality has changed very much during the last few years.

Twenty years ago I travelled with the German Mail to India ; there were a great many young Germans on board, and their object was to try for the post of assistant in one concern or another in Deli. There were many distinguished German names amongst them. Things had not gone very well in Germany ; the youthful scapegrace was sent off to the Far East. There were some amongst them who got drunk every evening, and it was a sad sight. I remember quite well a nice, most attractive, smart-looking young fellow bearing a great German name ; he was drunk nearly every night. . . . He would remain in seclusion for a day and then would reappear quite recovered and genial as ever. Two years later he died in Deli, scarcely twenty-two years old.

In those days the young assistants were given very much to immoderate excess. I think I am in a position to state that this is completely changed. Let the youngsters enjoy themselves in the " hari-besar," at the

Hotel, or elsewhere—why shouldn't they? They work hard, as hard as only Westerners in the Tropics work, and when one meets them they do not give one the impression of dissipated youths who cannot get along in Europe, but of keen young fellows, whose open-air life in the tobacco and rubber plantations is good for them, body and soul. Perhaps they had no brains for study, but they had other qualities and enthusiasms. Why should a young man who has no inclination for studying at the University not go to Deli and take up the far harder career of a healthy planter's life calling all his vital forces into being?

If I had a son who was healthy and muscular, and if he wished to become a novelist in the field of Dutch literature, I would say to him: "My dear fellow, try for the post of assistant in some concern in Deli and leave your novel unwritten. If you cannot get a job in a tobacco plantation, then your father will use his influence for you with some rubber-man."

The planter has his day mapped out in his own way and his own special kit. He wears his socks drawn up over his breeches, and his suspenders are visible. Unless he does this he is a "drawing-room planter" and would be laughed at. The first steps of a young planter, therefore, cannot be made otherwise than in these leggings. Let him see to it that his suspenders are not mauve, but black; this is more according to etiquette. He has his jacket buttoned up, khaki or white, and his sun-helmet over his sunburned face. He must exercise tact and authority over his coolies and remain firm without being harsh. From six in the morning until eleven he has to be in the fields or the barn; then he can have lunch (not rice-table) and snooze for an hour, after which he will go back to work. He usually goes early to bed in search of his well-earned rest. His assistant's hut is sometimes rough, primitive and desolate, but quite often it is more or less comfortable. He will certainly be lonely and would do well to have a hobby for his evenings and his holidays.

If he is married, his young wife will have a hard time in the primeval forest in the midst of tobacco, oil, or rubber. If, however, he works hard, and keeps smiling, then even in these troublous times he may be an inspector before he is forty, or at least an administrator. To be an inspector is an achievement. He lives in a splendid spacious house. There is a tennis court in front of it. His wife has got used to things and is happy—they may have been to Europe on leave and seen the disappointments of European life from close at hand. Their children grow and thrive, and by the time that their serious school time begins he is in a position to return to Europe for good with his wife and children.

He is making money, although the bonuses are not what they were. Life smiles at him, even though he has to work hard, hard, so hard as only the Westerner in the Tropics works. But he feels well and full of life, although perhaps he may be encompassed with envy, if, young as he is, he has made his career early through his zeal. There are advantages and disadvantages about everything, sunshine and shade in every kind of society.

In former times, especially amongst the young assistants, there were more shadows than to-day. In the old days, the laws of the hierarchy were very strictly laid down amongst the planters. An assistant must not wear this or that sort of jacket or helmet; he must not possess a bandy (little cart) of this or that pattern; he must not marry. Perhaps to this complex of causes might be attributed his immoderate excesses. But, however it was in former days, it is quite different now, and I do not think that I am too bold when I say that there is a great deal more sunshine in the life of both the youthful and more mature planter to-day. Let us forget for a moment the depression—nothing lasts for ever. Although your bonuses, Planters, are not what they were, your life, nevertheless—all things considered—is very enviable. Just try, for a moment, when you feel discouraged, to realise this, and compare your work with hundreds of "business careers" in the Fatherland!

I am going to visit a tobacco concern, and invite you to come with me. My guide is a young inspector and one who knows all about it. Where am I going? Shall we choose the prosperous concern, Sri Bintang Timoer (the Star of the East)? Whatever I do, I still remain a romancer and a phantasist, don't I?—and many plantations have such beautiful names. Why should there be no poetry in and around a tobacco concern? Alas! it was not the time of year when the tobacco trees were growing in the fields. The planter never speaks of a tobacco plant, but always of a tobacco tree. I shall not, therefore, see the spreading leaves in all their vivid beauty, for this takes place in March, April, and May. Meanwhile, however, we shall be shown other interesting things. My new friend comes to fetch me at six o'clock, socks over breeches and suspenders visible in characteristic fashion. I made his acquaintance on board, and friendship ripens quickly in favourable circumstances.

The road unfolds itself smoothly in front of our little car. We hurry along. Bamboos, bananas, and figs glitter green and gold after the rain. The spur of that imposing chain of mountains, the Barisans, winds itself along the horizon. The Simbajak, the lofty mountain which I shall show you more plainly later on, towers high into the morning sky. It is blue, and pink, and gold. All of a sudden, we find ourselves riding through a growth of fresh, tall-stemmed plants with broad leaves.

"Tobacco?" I ask hesitatingly.

I am very stupid, but every newcomer perpetrates the same blunder. I had taken a teak plantation on one side of the road for . . . tobacco! Sometimes a primeval forest is concealed behind those teak trees with their straight trunks, and an occasional elephant or tiger. The teak wood is hard and may be compared with that of our oak. The leaf of the young teak tree is broad and a graceful spoon-shape, but grows smaller and smaller the higher the tree grows. The teak, which as a plant is raised in boxes, has here already grown into a young plantation and wood. It shoots up very quickly, its

proud trunk as straight as a die. It is felled very young ; the wood very soon becomes building material for the tobacco barns; when older and heavier it gives even, smooth planks. Furniture of teak wood in India takes the same place as that of oak in our country.

The question of forestry is a most important one. Very striking are the sengon trees—albizzia, of a mimosa type. They cast a shadow across the road and across our motor. We have not got the hood up, and we take off our sun helmets. It is beautifully fresh, and the light is as though drenched in a humid haze of emerald. The albizzia trees are being sown. The seed grows into a plant and becomes a tree with almost incredible rapidity. My friend recognises a plantation which, as an assistant, he had sown only four years ago. Now this plantation is a wood. The leaves falling off renew the mould. The wild, rampant prairie grass, that enemy of all cultivation, is held in check by the growing power of these albizzia, or sengon-trees. The lantana, a thick shrub, with orange-red flowers, which grows luxuriantly along the roads, does this, too.

And now we have reached the plantation. I called it Sri Bingtang Timoer, the Star of the East. It does not matter what it is called in reality. We can choose it as a type. The Administrator comes to meet us. We simply must stay and have breakfast—it is eight o'clock —and we are very pleased to do so. As yet we have partaken of nothing except the traditional, early-morning coffee extract with boiling milk, which everywhere, at six o'clock in the morning, gives you strength to begin the day. After motoring for two hours, we enjoy our breakfast. Our hostess, according to the new fashion, is already dressed in a pretty white dress. Sarong and cabaya are no longer worn by ladies. Breakfast is according to English pattern. The house of the Administrator lies beautifully spacious, cool, and airy in sight of the long, blue Barisan range of mountains. The distant green valleys lie undulating before our eyes in the last of the morning mist. We admire the beautiful beds

of orchids, and pursue our way on foot to see how in a wooded ravine, when in July and August all the wild growth is cut down, the tobacco fields will be laid out.

III

THE tobacco planter in Deli has his own dialect. "This is one long, narrow contract," says my guide, indicating a stretch of ravine, and I assure you that for a moment I did not understand him. "Contract," however, is here used instead of "ground" which has been granted by contract. This ground, where the trees have been felled, is not very profitable. Trees and shrubs are collected after they have been cut down and the planter calls this "rough Koempoel," which must be "burned." Then the process is repeated until the ground is cleared of brushwood. After that the ground, in this case "the long, narrow contract," is dug up with a "patjoel" or spade—the Chinese coolies have their spades attached to a long stick, the Javanese coolies prefer a shorter stick. With each method of working there is a different movement and rhythm. No nationality and no race does the same things in the same manner, not even the most ordinary ones.

The question of the coolies is a very complicated one. Sometimes they are recruited by agents, sometimes there is in China voluntary recruiting, on behalf of which the coolies who are being repatriated exert themselves. They tell their relations and friends in their own country about the pleasant life of a coolie in Sumatra. On the whole there is some improvement if one compares it with all the misery which was inevitable in the old days. It seems, to me at any rate, as if the coolie had become almost a small land-owner.

After the busy fermenting time—more about this

later—the coolie starts work in his own field, which consists of about an acre. He prepares this, lays out his seed beds and tends the soil entrusted to him with care. At least, if he does so it will be to his advantage. The seed is gathered in April, and sown in January; a few months later the tobacco tree (not "plant") displays a wealth of leaves. In the interval the coolie occupies himself preparing his field for the plants; it is his busy time; he waters it, he "thins out," he weeds, he fights caterpillars and vermin. After forty days the little trees are brought to the ground in small baskets and planted out. If the plant, the little tree, shoots up, then a layer of earth is raised round about it and a fresh shoot takes hold at this point. After forty days, the coolie repeats this process until the mound is 2 or 3 cm. high. A coolie who works industriously can plant 18,000 trees in 50 days. He sells his tobacco to the firm at a fixed price.

The Javanese coolies receive a daily wage which is settled by contract. The Chinese do piece work. The enemy of both, especially of the Chinese coolies, is the inspector, or "tandil." He has been a coolie himself, and things have gone fairly well with him; he has now become an arrogant, powerful man; in all sorts of ways he tries —if he is a bad tandil—to swindle and cheat the coolies under him. If the coolie has a debt, then a bad tandil will attempt to make it impossible for this debt to be paid off, so that the coolie may remain to a certain extent a slave. In order to put a stop to this sharp practice the present labour-inspector insists that the coolie shall be paid in full and pay off his debt afterwards. The tandil, the natural enemy, is sometimes so hated by his coolies that if he dies his house is surrounded and plundered, his pigs killed, so that in the end the police have to interfere. Fortunately there are good tandils as well. At the risk of being punished the contract-coolie is not allowed to refuse work, under penalty, and accordingly he continues to live in a sort of servitude from which the Government tries to guard him.

When a coolie has been recruited he comes over and

Batta women with head ornament.

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is examined in the hospital. His long Chinese nails, upon which he prides himself, are cut. While he works on his field he receives an advance to procure his tools, and can take his place as a landowner, at any rate for the time being. His income-tax is paid for him and the previous work on his field—the "rough Koempoel"—he has to repay, but he is charged less than this work has cost the company. Eventual help with his field at the busiest time is charged to him also, up to a maximum fixed by contract. The head tandil—that mighty man—gives the Chinese coolie a statement of his current account every month. When the coolie delivers his tobacco it is taxed according to quality.

These circumstances, settled by the labour-inspector, appear to me to have made the life of coolies, about which one used to hear extraordinary things, a great deal better. The coolie dwellings are adequate and clean. In one of them a Chinese coolie-woman immediately offered me tea, although she hunted rather nervously for a cup for the "toean" with his pencil and notebook. The Klamboes (mosquito curtains) were clean. I heard, however, that they could be dirty, too, and it was considered a joke that I happened to see those tidy, clean curtains about the coolie-bed. I do not believe, however, that a few minutes before I visited the koelie-compound clean curtains were put up in my honour.

During harvesting time—after the tobacco is picked—the coolie is paid off. Then he is rich. He gambles, throws his money about and becomes poor again. No longer a land-owner, he spends his last cents on opium and . . . starts again. After twenty years' service he receives a pension of F7.50. If he wishes to return to China he receives a lump sum. The Government sees to it that he has no opporunity for the game of dice and dissipation.

Although I miss the beautiful sight of the tobacco tree in the field, I can appreciate the meticulous neatness which reigns in the fermenting house, under its iron roofing, and in the drying sheds. The picked tobacco leaves

(40 or 50 of these are bundled together) are sorted by coolies and arranged according to length by women. This takes place on graduated fan-shaped planks.

The bundles of leaves can then be "received" by the assistant in the fermenting barns. These bundles of tobacco are stacked. This stacking is an astonishingly neat process, which the women especially carry out with admirable care. By means of thin planks the border stackers indicate the limit beyond which the square pile is not allowed to go, and with deft hands they then stack the bundles of leaves. The women climb up on light ladders and move about on carefully-placed planks across the pile of precious bundles, stacking them higher and higher. In the stacks is a hollow bamboo with a thermometer to control the temperature of the heating. If the temperature reaches a certain degree the whole stack is turned over. Sometimes this happens twice.

The work of these women is graceful and fills one with admiration because of their confident, careful movements: there is true Oriental delicacy about it. These women, squatting in long rows, as they stack and sort the bundles of leaves with deft fingers present a fascinating picture in the rather subdued light inside. I have been told that no fewer than 60 million tobacco leaves are handled after a harvest on a not very large plantation. The square bales look very trim; the future outside leaves of your best cigars are packed in bales of fine matting. They will be despatched and loaded with the utmost care.

Here is a little assistant's house. The assistant himself, however, is at work. It is situated on the edge of the long, narrow contract. Sometimes after one year to three years if it is not in a very suitable place it is taken up and moved. This is because the tobacco-fields after the first harvest year are given to the natives to plant "padi" (rice). Each family then receives a "djaloeran," a field sufficient for his needs. Not until eight years after that first harvest is the field declared suitable once more for the cultivation of tobacco. Consequently, the assistant lives now here, now there, and takes up his house and

walks; especially in the case of "a long, narrow contract," where his dwelling cannot be placed in the middle of it.

For months at a time, from January to May, the barns are empty, for in March and April the tobacco trees are in full leaf. What happens to the tobacco flower? Well, the little trees are "topped," with the exception of the strongest ones; the chosen ones, whose pollination after selection is brought about artificially, are covered with gauze and see to the new tobacco generation of the following year.

Finally, I visited the plantation hospital which we called the Star of the East. The hospital was worthy of the fine name of my imagination and was at the same time of touching reality. I admired the physician who acted as my guide, because of his years of devotion to the Chinese coolies. Here it is that the coolie on his arrival is examined; if he is found ill he gets cured, or, if he is incurable, he is sent back. He is weighed regularly, and the name of each coolie is marked down in the archives with particulars about the state of his health. He is usually suffering from sores on the feet or legs, because he does not choose to wear sandals or shoes and the thorns and prickles sometimes make bad gashes. They are nursed by Chinese, Javanese and Bengales.

If he is not suffering from leg-wounds, it is probably violent malaria, which confines him, doubled up with pain, to his baleh-baleh. I moved among the beds of sick men and sick women. The doctor knew them all by name, and gave them words of comfort for the future.

Outside lay the Chinese cemetery, with its little narrow, terraced stone walls, behind which were the bones of the dead. Their name and the year of their death is recorded. In front of the symbolic, holy Exit of Life, which like the Entrance of Death is built of stone on grass sods in the Sacred Form of the female sex, was the lawn, upon which the obsequies are celebrated. A tepekong-temple with a little image and holy picture—the doorpost covered with red prayer-papers and gilded proverbs on pennants—was

hidden among banana trees and was filled with the scent of incense. A few days before, a coolie had died and the odour of sacrifice to the gods—the black, angry one and the good, rose-coloured one—still hung about.

The afternoon sun glowed in the azure sky and shone through the young golden-green, transparent banana leaves. The long blades of the alang-alang trembled although there was no wind, and a kite with outspread wings in the blue sky uttered its shrill cry of deep woe: the woe which in the East, in spite of all its flowering beauty and leafy riches, hovers in the heavy skies—an insolvable secret to the Westerner.

IV

To-day we motored from Medan back to Belawan, our place of arrival, to see the new harbour works. It is a pretty road between coconut and banana trees, always green and gold in these rainy seasons; Nature has stepped out of her nightly bath and the early morning hour is one of beauty and bliss; the banana leaves are heavy with moist sunshine, as it were, dripping with it; how beautiful is that young banana leaf over there now that the sun shines through it; and patches of sunshine from the coconut leaves with their heavy load of nuts, piled up high, one nut close against the other, under the shade of the leaves, trickle like green molten lacquer down the little bamboo houses. Small Chinese shop-keepers and inland peasants live at the roadside. Immediately behind the road are the fields, and here the land is in the hands of the planters.

The Chinese tepekong temples—sometimes the temple and sometimes the image is so called—are like fragile ornaments with their roof decorations of porcelain dragons and porcelain flowers, whilst little sticks of incense, kindled, give out their fragrance in blue spiral wisps of smoke. Along the roadside grows luxuriantly the nipa-palm, the leaves of which serve as roof-covering to the little houses, and the long, straight, slender pinang palm. The controller of Laboehan—this lies between Belawan and Medan—is to conduct me further to Belawan. Here is the Kampong-Besar—the large village—where live about fifty Dutch youths, who are doing the dredging work for the new harbour. We motor along through

the polders—oh, truly Dutch word!—and across the Deli River. It was close to this that my wife lived when she was a girl of eight years old, and her father, almost a pioneer, managed one of the very first tobacco enterprises. There was no fine town of Medan, capital of the east coast of Sumatra. There was constant danger at that time. Hungry Battas often plundered the plantations, and a brave planter's family would be murdered now and again by a prowling spy, disguised as a tiger. The atmosphere of romance was well suited to a book by Aimard. This was more than forty years ago. At that time there was still the insignificant little harbour, now choked up and fallen into ruin. . . .

Since then Western effort has triumphed. The big mail ships still cannot put in to the landing-place of Belawan—the motor-boat *Jansen* brought us, a few days ago, from the *Prins der Nederlanden* to Belawan—but in the middle of 1923, the chief engineer, and director of the Grootius Company, hopes that the new harbour will be ready. Down near the sea the primeval forest has been cleared. The sea is swarming with fishing proas, out of which the nets are cast in the early morning; a Chinese junk is sailing away with her beautifully-patched, square, drab sails filled to the wind, and over there the djermals rise out of the water. Djermals are little bamboo sentry-boxes, bamboo roofs on tall pillars, surrounded by a fence. Further off towards the south, where the fishermen live in these picturesque djermals, the pirate, the robber and the fisherman still do as they like; for a couple of piculs of rice they will cut their mate's throat; young fisher boys are not safe from one another; they rob and murder each other for the most trifling reasons. What is one to do?

These fishers, the freebooters and pirates, live by fishing, but also by robbing. They dwell in their djermal and sampans, and both are silhouetted in the silvery light of this rain-washed morning hour like fine streaks and dabs of sepia, bamboo roofs and bamboo stems rising delicate and graceful from the pearl-grey sea beneath

grey-white clouds in a soft blue sky. Do not dream of strong colours; the land, sky, and waters, faded in this month of violent rains, can be visualised only in half-tints, and the Riviera has a far more severe aspect than this.

The Ocean-Port—this is the grand name which will be borne by this grand work, the completion of which is to take place in the near future. The quay wall is to be a thousand metres long. The harbour is to have a greater depth than that of Rotterdam. Twenty-four floating caissons are to be built, twelve of which are already completed. When the caissons are ready they are floated out to the wharf. The dredging machines are built here. The concrete is reinforced with iron expanded metal and is put into a wooden mould; after that the caisson is "stripped" and the mould removed. At the time of the war, the iron re-inforcing ordered arrived as a conglomeration of scrap iron—a photograph gives an almost humorous reproduction of it—it could not be checked, and then it appeared that 100 tons were missing, this representing a loss of 40,000 guilders. But this is a mere detail in a tremendous work of this sort.

A tremendous work—a work for Europeans. It is in this sort of thing that they are worthy of admiration in the East. They work, and they work terrifically, continuously, and their work is most admirable. They never give up, they carry on and on. The climate, their greatest enemy, never aids them, wears them out with fever and a gradual drain on their vitality which is not immediately recognised. But it is as though they were attacked with fever of a different kind, the fever of work. No Oriental, born out here, had ever laid down a harbour at Belawan, any more than any Oriental had ever undertaken or established a tobacco enterprise or a rubber plantation.

It seems to me that the souls of these natives, these Malays and Battas, still continue to smile at our European efforts, as at mysteries without any solution. It is true that these Orientals are not like the Chinese, and still less

like the Japanese, in whom very different souls are slumbering or have awakened. But here in Deli, in this climate, on this coast, where fifty years ago there was nothing but virgin forest, the Oriental is possessed of a primeval soul of tradition—tradition which dates from a fabulous past. This past was never dominated by work, but rather by the contemplation of an all-powerful Nature. This we shall see still more plainly when we visit the old, possibly pre-Hindu, monasteries in grottoes and holy places, hewn primitively out of the rock, which, on the other hand, seem mysteries to us Europeans. Wide and deep as the Ocean and the Abyss is the insuperable divergence of race, small as our earth may be.

It is strange, perhaps, that after having been so conscientiously conducted by my guide round the harbour works at Belawan, that I should indulge in such a far-reaching meditation. But this Eastern atmosphere arouses meditation, in the same way that it arouses melancholy. Nature here is so overwhelming, it fills a sensitive mind with oppression. Tremendous and majestic are the adjectives which characterise it. These words used by everyone who sees or wishes to describe or portray these mountains and seas and this vegetation have become stereotyped. But it would be childish and evidence of word-mannerism to seek for other adjectives. However much I should like to give to my descriptions the freshness of new words, I can find no others than those which everyone before me has found. Immense and majestic. And this majesty, this immensity, impels you, in your littleness, to contemplation and awakens in you an inevitable melancholy.

It is like a bird of prey that is always hovering o'er you. It glides upon you with the hours when you rise betimes as you always do. It is impossible to stay within your mosquito curtain when once awake, even if it is still dark at five o'clock. More, it is true, in these months of he Monsoon, than in the days of the long-lasting drought. Morn and midday may be full of a glowing force, and fill you with happiness and beauty, but the afternoon dusk

Fermentation Barn Tobacco.

Wajang-Wong for coolies at a tobacco plantation.

falls upon you at four o'clock at this season. The sky is dark with heavy clouds bulging with rain, from which in a moment the dark flood will pour. The electric lights in the house look like spectral lights. Something is hovering round, it is quite certain. Is it inimical or merely sad? True, it is something immense, but at the same time gloomy. It comes from afar and from out the moist earth. It is haze and mist, but it is mysterious as well, and you feel it weigh upon your spirit. You chatter and drink tea, after your second bath—oh, the gloomy bathroom with the ghostly Martevanen which I recollect from my early days of childhood!—and the lamps burn brightly and visitors arrive, and the sound of music and the laughter of European women may be heard. . . .

Out there in the dusky garden is the wailing of a flute. It is a painful, mocking, amorous, lugubrious sound, pitched very high. Strange, long-legged locust, two of them, chase each other through the verandah where you are sitting. Lizards run one after the other along the wall or on the ceiling and catch one another's flies. The big toad hops in, and once again predicts "more rain!" Outside there is the croaking of frogs, the chirping of cicadas, the chattering of crickets in an endless subdued evening concert. Now it grows more intense. What are all these thousand sounds? What other flutes and creatures than I have named join in the harmony? It is well to sit still in the dark, somewhere, to fold one's hands, to cease from thinking, from questioning, and to solemnly declare: "God, Thy will be done . . . for what I will, is vanity. . . ."

And then you realise what is meant by the "Bogey in the Clouds," with whom the little ones, who want to go on playing, are chased off to bed. He may be identified to some extent with the malaria-mosquito, which now is flitting about and is very small, although the Bogey-man in the clouds is very big, so big that his wings are like two great night shadows, spreading over wood and sea. If the children go on playing, naked, with only an amulet round their necks or a little girdle round their

plump, rice-filled tummies, they will catch fever—no, the Bogey will come from the clouds to fetch them! The small is like unto the great; danger and sickness, calamity and death, lurk in a gnat the same as in a volcano; under the earth, over the earth, it comes from an insect or from the wicked gods. . . .

It is a distraction to go to the Comédie-Stamboul, or to the Wajang-Tjina. Why the Malay Comedy Theatre should be called Stamboul, which is Constantinople, is not very clear. Moreover, an art, in which an uninteresting play was represented, I did not find very beautiful. But my host, the Governor, with whom we had gone—we were received in state with the national anthem, in a sort of improvised box with flowers and cigars on the table—enjoys the innuendo of the Malay clown, who seems to act in a most Shakespearian manner, towards an errant prince. I do not understand Malay literature sufficiently well. Much more amusing I found an evening at the Wajang-Tjina, the Chinese theatre, although the music of the very frowsy-looking musicians was made up of a series of ear-splitting, heart-rending discords. But the play of the Lotus Pond—the Pond was merely represented by two white flowers at the side of an inscription—presumably, "this is the pond"—presented much that was beautiful in the sumptuously-attired fairy-like figures of angels out of a Chinese Paradise, one of whom was to woo a mortal.

The little figures, the dewis, the angels with their china-like, delicately-whitened faces, and in their silver and gold richly embroidered costumes, were like tiny figures escaped from the finest egg-shell teacup. It was all very graceful and delicate to the eye, and appallingly discordant to the ear. There were also clowns to be seen, servants and vassals of the heroes of war, who, with fearfully rolling eyes, long, hanging moustaches, and tremendous swords which they flourished, were hugely enjoyed by the democratic element.

The play lasted for many hours, but our Western nerves and admiration could not be held in suspense for

more than a couple of hours, and in a downpour of rain, almost white in the dark night, we motored home through a ghostly, white Medan. At the Hôtel de Boer there were still sitting round a table a couple of belated planters, chatting.

V

In Medan we admired the large Mosque, in modern Arabian style, with its graceful outline and soft golden gleam, the minaret beside it, the tower from which in Arabia and Africa the Mussulman is reminded, morning and evening, that Allah is great and omnipotent and Mahomet his prophet. We were taken there by the district controller of the town and the Tengkoe-Besar awaited us at the entrance. This was very unexpected, as the Tengkoe-Besar is the Crown Prince of Deli, and when we found him waiting there, looking so simple in his white coat, I did not realise who he was. He told me that his father, the Sultan of Deli, was old and sometimes ill, and apologised for not being able to receive me, but said that he would like to show me the Mosque and afterwards the Sultan's Reception Palace, which is always a different building from the private house, which serves as a dwelling-place.

I took off my shoes, because the "mules" which were given me were too small to slip over my shoes, and the Crown Prince did the same. After having admired the Mosque—I forget how much it had cost, and, to my shame, even the name of the European architect—I put on my shoes again and tied the laces, as there was no one whom I dared ask to do this. Certainly not the Governor's chauffeur who had driven us here, in these days when democracy and importance triumph, even in the most lowly heart. I had thought, however, that the Tengkoe-Besar, who had slipped on his shoes, would be helped with his laces by a member of his retinue or one of the little

boys who stood looking at us with sharp eyes in small, brown faces, surmounted by the little skull-caps which they wear here. But when with some difficulty—I am not so very young, and perhaps my braces were somewhat tight—I had finished with my laces, I saw the Tengkoe-Besar standing in his shoes with loose laces, looking slightly embarrassed. I grasped the situation at once : I understood that—oh, Democracy !—there was at that moment no one, either among his or my chauffeurs or among the Inland police who stood there, or among the small, jet-eyed youth, anyone who wished to help the Tengkoe with his laces !

In Java, three or four crouching subjects of the Tengkoe would have instantaneously thrown themselves down and tied his laces. Or perhaps things have changed there too. I turned away in the most natural manner, but by means of a sidelong glance I saw that the Crown Prince, who was still young, though rather corpulent, had felt more at liberty behind my back to stoop to his loose laces. He succeeded in tying them, and smilingly we approached each other ; he preceded us in his motor to the Reception Palace.

You must not picture this Reception Palace of the Sultan of Deli as a monument of taste and beauty or a scene in a Scheherazade's tale. I had seen the palaces of the Bey at Tunis, and was therefore prepared. Here also there were strange pieces of furniture and ornaments and mirrors. The Oriental possesses a flawless taste only when he follows his own tradition of beauty. Then everything is lovely, right, graceful, and even luxurious. If he grafts Western ideas on to his Eastern stem there results only too often a tasteless mixture. The Tengkoe was obliged to extricate a silver tobacco plant, which had been given to his father, the Sultan, from its silver box, without any help from his retinue of servants who stood round about him.

Should the Crown Prince ever deign to read these little indiscretions in connection with my visit to the Mosque and Palace, he will probably smile and say proudly :

" What do you mean, sir ? Such are the times, and you see how philosophically I conform to them, I, the descendant of the rulers of Kalinga, the great pre-Indian Kingdom, proud as I am of this descent because all other Malay rulers are only descended from your Iskander, I mean Alexander the Great ! "

All manner of races mingle at Medan. Japanese, Chinese, Cingalese and the various Sumatra types—among which are Battas and a few Minang-Kabauers—are easily distinguished. The first two form a small shopkeepers' class, and among the Hindus—the so-called " Klings "—you will notice in particular the usurers, the money-lenders, the Orang-Tjetti, whose guild—if I may use this word—is old as Time (for Ptolemaeus mentions Tjettis in his writings). They are pre-Indian merchants, who arrived on battleships to do business and to lend money to the Malay rulers. These Tjettis or usurers honour their traditions and antique Hindu religion, and have in Medan a separate temple among the three or four other temples which one finds there.

Our visit was very unusual. As soon as it was known that the Governor with his relations and guests were going to pay a visit to this temple, Hindu musicians foregathered and preceded our cars, which were moving slowly along. There were muffled drums and clear-toned cymbals, which accompanied the flutes. To Western ears the music was much finer than the Chinese music of the Wajang-Tjina. The chief of the usurers received us with great ceremony, a number of inquisitive spectators formed a group, and floral chains, fashioned most skilfully out of melati and kenanga—very strongly-scented flowers—were hung about us. It would have been crudely Western to have refused to be decorated in this manner. Our clothes also were perfumed with Eastern scent. We sat there in two fragrant rows, whilst the music grew more passionate and intense.

The temple had three sanctuaries, three niches or little rooms, in which three little mis-shapen idols, black with incense, were visible above the altar. There was

"Mariamman" in the middle, that is "Njonja-Siwa!" Mrs. Siwa, the wife of Siwa, between, I believe, her son, Soewami, and Ganeça, the wise god with the elephant's trunk. A Brahmin, forehead and breast tattooed with mystic stripes, marked with the ash of Bengalese earth and sandalwood, took the service and the offering, swung the four- or five-lipped brass lamp and lit the incense-sticks in front of the little gods, who sat under small, golden sunshades. We also saw a large gilt palanquin, a state-chariot, upon which on some days the idols, or possibly only that of the "Njonja Siwa," were (was) led round in a procession. If I tell you anything which is not quite accurate you must forgive me, because the music grew so intense and passionate that I found it difficult to listen to the Tjetti gentleman's information. And I was quite deaf by the time we saw in front of the idol niches the iron spikes and pointed stakes upon which the fakirs dance with bare feet. They do not bleed when they go into ecstasies.

Life is very full at Medan. There is always something to do or to see, and the long days are all too short. Although I am only a tourist, and not a planter, an official, or a merchant, I have my busy days as well as anyone else. Whoever thinks that one lives a lazy life under the tropical sun is wrong. As a matter of fact the sun is very subdued. The light in this month of rains is veiled, even during the hours that it does not rain. One is struck by the look of freshness of everything and of everyone: the white-clad men, the women in light frocks, the white houses, the green gardens, the green lawns, the foaming river—the natives nowadays so often dressed in white—they all give a look of freshness to this spacious green and white town.

Everything and everyone bathes, and looks bathed and washed, even Nature itself, especially after a rain spray. How newly-washed the neat white covers of the little dos-à-dos look, the hired traps, drawn by a smart Batta pony, in which one sits back to back. But, owing to this general freshness, people work very hard at Medan. The

depression about rubber is most marked and causes many of the hard workers a certain amount of worry. If you should become more intimate with these hard workers you will notice that many of them are over-worked. In that case they seek renewed strength on the upland plains of Brastagi, where we stayed for several days in a new hotel. This is the Switzerland of Deli, because of the vast hills, the mountain air, and even the soil upon which palms and bamboo do not flourish, but where strawberries are grown. Every Deli man who can manage it has his week-end cottage at Brastagi, and even the English come over from Singapore to get a breath of fresh air.

The Medan road winds its way upwards between clefts and rocks, past the Petani waterfall and majestic, tall-trunked trees—either coconut or nipa palm, arien or bamboo tree, bread-fruit tree with notched leaves or tree-fern with uncurling frond—always harmoniously outlined clumps, as if the godheads of these trees were courtiers who knew how to group together the things which enhance each other's beauty. This noble, majestic Nature is always complete, even when man has wound a road through it, and has such a power of growth that whenever a tree, plant or leaf is destroyed, torn or uprooted, all its power of growth is immediately called into being in order to restore whatever was spoiled into a harmonious whole.

The view from Brastagi is extensive, and the mountains surge about us. Over there is the Sibajak, the smoke always rising from its sulphur-yellow cracked chasm. It is as if this mountain—the Exalted One is its name—was split in two at the time of the primeval cataclysms. The hotel is cheerful and crowded—as it deserves to be—especially on Saturday evenings, when an amateur quartet from Medan plays untiringly.

Just in front of the Governor's pasangrahan, lost in the solitude of the mountains, hangs the strange atmosphere of the Indian evenings, a brooding sadness, an inexpressible melancholy, especially when Batta musicians, sitting on a mat in the falling dusk, play on the

sroenai (hobo) and beat the gadas (drum), whilst the soft, mysterious gong booms at intervals. They extol the company in their music, but it jars a little at this hour. I know not know why, perhaps because the mystic moment is not suited to it; everything about us is so sad. Do the natives not feel it? But then the koeltjapi-player, the Batta lute-player, made his appearance; an old, withered little man. And from his narrow, blackish lute, with its two strings, he drew forth much naïve melody, and solemnly he gave us his little musical stories: they were about a dog and a bird, and you could hear the dog bark very shrilly and frolic about the little bird, and when I looked attentively at the old, crumpled lute-player I noticed that he seemed very happy to be able to play like this, with such pure, high notes, illustrating his naïve little story so melodiously—and his happiness made me also smile contentedly in this hour of dusk and melancholy.

VI

Monkeys run about the road, just in front of our motor, which is hastening on, through the high-grown teak-plantations, full of feathery blossoms, to Matapaoh, an oil-palm plantation, forty or fifty kilometers distant from here, which I am to see. The compounds are very scattered; it is delightful to see the naked children as they bathe and play in the pools which surround the compounds, and from which the banana-orchards rise with bright reflections of leaf and fruit in the smooth, clear, still water, which has not yet been sucked up by the earth. The klappa-savit, also called ape-palm, is planted in long rows here.

And now we reach the fields of the concern we are coming to see. Over there are the sheds, and the Administrator is coming to meet us. Perhaps it is better first of all to go through the plantation itself, which stretches over a plot of 100 acres. They are bi-sexual trees, bearing male and female flowers: it is the latter which grow into fruit. The pollination is carried out artificially; the "kawin-poehoen," the "marrying of the trees," is a delicate and important operation. The female flower changes colour from white to red, and purplish black. When it has become as dark as this it is too late for marriage. Thus, every day the oil-tree is watched and, as soon as the flower is found to be marriageable, it is pollinated. The pollen smells of iris or of anis. Sometimes a period occurs when only the male flower develops. Then it is chopped and chopped in order to check such virile insistence, when

suddenly the receptive female flowers may be seen once more. When the bunch has developed sufficiently it is taken into the shed and left there for three days to ripen.

When the bunch is ripe women pick the fruit quite easily. After that it is taken into the factory. The air is heavy with grease and oil. There are swarms of earwigs. The fruit is sterilized in a temperature of 100° Centigrade. The refuse serves as fuel for the locomotors. After that the fruit is warmed in steam tanks; the dead microbe which remained in it has to be destroyed. The sterilized fruit is caught, pounded to pulp, and then re-heated, undergoing after that a first and second pressing. In big factories this pressing takes place hydraulically; here the press is turned by two coolies. If the fruit is dried in the sun, then kernel and fibre are separated in the pulper; the fibre comes away, the pips remain. The pips fall as though from a revolving, many-cornered cage, and they are cracked in the crusher until the kernel is divided from the rind.

Once more I realised how hard they were working to bring this industry to success. Once again it is left to Western effort to extract oil from the fruit of low palm trees, which apparently are of no use save to look graceful and to offer the shade of their leaves to a tiger or tigress, whose skin is almost one in colour and stripe with the play of sunshine and shadow on the scarcely-stirring leaves. For those who work here it is a case of early to rise, at work all day, and early to bed, almost without any distraction. The sea is not far distant, and certainly offers itself for bathing, swimming, and fishing. There is also a chance of shooting a rhinoceros near the river, where the crocodile lies basking, making itself look like a rotten bit of wood so as not to attract too much attention. The town is too far for the administrator and employees to get there every day. Here in Matapaoh, amongst the oil-palm-trees, they work and they work hard, and although the native, man and woman, works with the European, he must often think, I imagine: "How hard the Dutchman

works and how foolish he is to work so hard . . . although I am obliged to work with him ! "

On our return, we motored past various rubber plantations of the Deli Moeda. It is the " hevea-brasiliensis," the tree imported from Brazil which has ousted the " karet-tree," the " ficus elastica," a beautiful, majestic tree, with strong, shiny leaves ; a tree which, whether cut, notched or felled produces a flow of white latex. The " hevea " seemed to be more profitable, although the leaves of those trees all around me seem to murmur : " Depression ! " and again, " Depression ! " I believe that rubber is on the point of rising, and that the " hevea " is not nearly so beautiful as the " karet," although this lack of beauty is of no consequence. The hevea-rubber gardens are monotonous plantations ; the rather sombre, lofty, but unpretentious, trees are laid out in avenues. The trunks are notched in slanting strips. The " cups," which, when the trees are tapped, receive the milk—a thick, white sap—stand by every tree on a stick planted in the ground or are fastened round the stem. It is absolutely necessary that the roots shall not be exposed. Irrigation and vegetable mould round the tree are provided for in various ways ; in one place by round, and in another by square, holes wells or ditches. Some rubber planters prefer a system of semi-circular ramparts, sloping down towards the tree-trunk.

There is not much work being done : " Depression ! " " Depression ! " One solitary coolie or a woman is disconsolately tapping. The thick, white latex is dripping into a cup from out of a zinc spout. The milk is then poured into so-called " milk cans." I see trees fourteen years old, and older. Sometimes the fruit falls off and bursts.

The rubber-trees stand numbered in their rows, and there is no sun, but the twilight sinks betimes through their melancholy branches and leaves, down the spotted trunks. It is a gloomy, monotonous tapping for money. Here and there no work at all is being done, and the assistants' houses are closed. When the assistants

have been dismissed they seek other careers in Medan, the cool, white, green town.

The raw rubber, vulcanised with sulphur, gives the "smoked sheet," now sterilized against infection. The milk, in zinc tanks, diluted with acetic acid, curdles, coagulates, and gives a coagulum from which the worthless material is separated. The coagulum is a plastic, soft mass; two steel rollers press it into the "crepe," which, when dried, really resembles a piece of coarse, white crepe. Along the road, the sombre, rather gloomy rubber forests form a perspective with the avenues of the numbered trees, each tree with its cup either close by, near or actually on the trunk. And I really do not know, now I am told that rubber is rising, whether the faded green, unpretentious leaves are still murmuring monotonously "Depression!" For the leaves of the trees quickly learn what the wind, first from this quarter, and then from that, has to tell them: the wind, I think, was whispering the "Exchange" reports to the rubber trees.... Or does the rise or fall of securities really leave them indifferent, and do they let themselves be tapped or not tapped, happen what may. And, in the meantime, the "Algemeene Vereeniging Rubber Oostkust Sumatra" is studying unceasingly the mother plant in a beautiful laboratory for the combating of its disease. Oh! what human altruism as contrasted with the egoism of the tree.

We motor past the Palace of the Sultan of Serdang (you must picture this as something very simple, however exalted it sounds) and pull up in order to see the Sultan's orang-outang in its pen in the front garden. It looks as though there were three, but when the strange, gigantic, ape-creature unfolds itself we see that it is only one ape, a female orang-outang, a colossal creature, which unwinds itself out of its very contorted attitude, and gazes at us with the deepest melancholy, evidently hoping to be given a banana to eat. As the Sultan's younger brother is walking in the garden with a retinue he comes towards us, greeting our guide, whom he knows, and asking me about the situation in Europe. . . .

A proverb : " Who runs before a horse will be bitten, who runs behind will be kicked " . . . I think applied pretty well to the political situation which was touched upon in this conversation. . . .

In order to go to Pangkalan Brandan, and to see something of the petroleum exploitation there, it is necessary to obtain a special permit I learn, to my horror, as we are about to step into the motor. Then I think it over : after my lectures in Medan, I was invited to give some lectures in Pangkalan Brandan ; at the same time, this invitation contained another—to be the guest of Mr. J. Schildt, the Administrator of the Batavian Petroleum Company, amongst which four Dutch-Indian concerns Pangkalan Brandan takes a very prominent place. In the absence of Mr. Schildt, his deputy, Mr. Van der Vegt, and his wife are to receive us. I therefore no longer have any fear of not seeing anything of the petrol or oil industry.

May I, if necessary, remind the reader, that the Batavian is a daughter company of the noted Great Dutch Royal Company, for the Exploitation of Petroleum Springs in the Dutch Indies, amongst which there are many companies for production and sale. Even when still on board we had seen a strange glow from the distance. Was it the glow of a metropolis ? Was it really, as they said, the useless gases, which were set alight at Pangkalan Brandan and carried off in torch-like pipes, giving off this glowing reflection ? I have since heard that this strange glow was the reflection of electric light and burning gases as well.

We are to stay two days here. The way thither leads past Tandjoeng Poera. It is the first road that I have taken through the country towards the north, almost as fara s the sea on which I was sailing a short time back. The beauties of the road are manifold, and there are always palm, banana, and bamboo forests, with little houses burned a golden brown by the sun's heat, among them. In order to let you have a glimpse of so many beautiful things I shall have to make a choice. . . .

May I choose the pedatis, wagons (sometimes called " grobaks ") not often drawn by buffaloes, but more often by Bengal oxen ? The beautiful wagon with its roof, like that of a house of black aren-fibre or golden palm leaf, or even coarse grass. This wagon is part of the road, part of nature, part of the landscape ; it is like a little house rolling along on slowly-moving wheels, similar in colouring to its surroundings. Sometimes it carries a few teak trunks, which appear to be heavy. It is a Bengal ox which is drawing it. I sympathise with them both : buffalo and Bengal ox. Later on I will give you a picture of the buffalo ; now I can see nothing but this Bengal ox. The beast looks as though it were a sacred and holy one, so beautiful is it. And this beautiful, sacred ox, imported from Further India, this white, light brown, or grey ox is a draught animal. It drags its burden along with elegance and dignity, without any haste, as though aware of its almost divine beauty.

It is strange what a religious and almost mystical atmosphere emanates from these beasts. Look at the head of that ox, back towards the tips of the horns, sometimes round, sometimes standing out straight, and sometimes slightly bowed. See the almost arrogant backward poise of the head, and the peaceful, pensive eyes gazing straight ahead. See the beautiful body, the slender flanks hollowing towards the broader withers. The deep neck, on which lies the yoke in front of the hump, with flopping dewlap swelling out from neck and chest—like an ornament (I should use the word flounce or ruffle if it were not antagonistic to the atmosphere, the time and the beast)—thus goes the Bengal ox, with quiet tread, and draws the pedati along. Or it grazes yonder in the high grass, the young bull calf grazing near the mother-cow. . . .

Beautiful beasts, compelling veneration and respect ! Why do I think, when I look on these beasts, of the gods of their native land ? Of transmigration, and Brahmins, or Aryan philosophy and poetry ? Have these things any connection with the beautiful animal ? At this moment I

have no time to read the Vedas : indeed, I have not these holy writings at hand. Overt here oil beckons me; I must see something of the "Royal" which agitates so many hearts and purses. But along by Stabat and Wampsoe, across the bridge, over river and stream, the carts slowly pass and as the motor hurries on I turn round to look at the oxen again: the wise, beautiful draught-beasts who make me think, I know not why, of Pre-Indian gods, of heroes, princesses, foundling princes, monasteries, ponds and lotus-flowers. Do the Bengal oxen remember anything of this from a former existence or age? Or are these foolish dreams? . . .

VII

On our arrival at Tandjoeng-Poera, we see in front of the Assistant-Resident's house, between the Palm avenue and the Senna avenue, a cart drawn by a ruminating buffalo, rolling slowly along. In the cart under the little roof lies—what a surprise !—a dead tiger, light and shade blending on its glorious skin. A number of people surrounding the cart at a distance make reverent comments, and I am impressed, too, more especially because I have heard a good many stories about tigers recently.

Is this tiger a so-called tiger-familiar ? I ask the Assistant-Resident who welcomes us. Surely not a tiger-familiar, because they dared to shoot him ? The Assistant-Resident does not think so. I will tell you later, oh reader, what a tiger-familiar is, not during this sunny hour when our host and hostess are awaiting us with a delightful luncheon. No, I will tell you about tigers-familiar when the hour of mystery has descended darkly on forest and field and sea. . . . Then you will be more in the mood to hear about the " tigers-familiar " of Sumatra—the tigers who follow a prince or a hunter and . . . watch over them. You may even hear about a " crocodile-familiar," and you will probably be astonished, but afterwards . . . you may believe ! Have patience ! Have patience !

That afternoon we passed by several apparently deserted rubber estates, to Pangkalan Brandan. Before dinner there was music at the club. Next day, the " Grand Tour." The Drilling Superintendent and the

Secretary of the Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappy [1] accompany us; my wife and the superintendent's wife also join the party. We go by car early in the morning to Besitan, where we get out by the river, and in spite of our modern craft the view is full of poetry; the banks are covered with bamboo, banana, coconut-trees, and nipa. "Are these boeaias (crocodiles) dreaming on the bank?" I ask, spying the land. "Look, over there!"

It is, however, only part of the rotting trunk of a tree, drifting wearily along. We have seen no boeaias, no elephant, no rhinoceros bathing. Yet this fauna is not unusual here, and a dreaming crocodile camouflages itself as a rotting log. I am told by the inspector that there is a geological department which prospects the ground for the Company. I will not bore you, reader, with terms too technical and geological for a superficial causerie such as mine. It is sufficient for you to know that in ninety cases out of a hundred oil is found as a result of prospecting. I am also told about the very first well, where the women offer sacrifices in order to become fruitful.

Twenty years ago the Achenese attacked us here, at the frontiers, now we have a hundred and fifty stalwart Achenese as coolies for boring operations.

We pulled up alongside the new exploitation field, Tamboeng Toelan. Two hundred Chinamen have built a little railway across the swamp. Large crabs swarm here. Amidst the sombre Eastern landscape, sombre even at this sunny hour in the morning, arises the modern Western machinery—the steam-pump which supplies the water for the drilling, the boilers which supply the steam for the drilling plant. The deep hole is bored with a huge drilling chisel on an angry bar, which, with the counter-weight attached to it, thuds up and down in the violated earth. Whenever the boring tool has gone down a few feet deeper the disintegrated soil is pumped out. Then the cutter thuds down the hole again. Every two feet the string of casing-tube is inserted further.

[1] Batavian Oil Company.

Lake Toba.

Author with Mrs. Westenenk at Lake Toba.

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" Ario ! " " Ario ! " comes the piercing cry of the coolies who encourage one another and guide the angry movement of the drilling chisel, under the command of a European driller. It costs tons of money to bore to a sufficient depth, so that the risk is very great, should no oil be found. If, on the other hand, the oil is found, then—well, the actual amount of the figure by which the Company benefits escapes my memory !

After having inspected Tamboeng Toelang, we make our way across the water, towards the five sea-creeks of Tandjoeng Kranio. On the left may be seen the blue outline of the Gajoer range. Here on these waters, over these swamps—we regret that there is no crocodile dreaming, log-like in the mud—pirates used, but a short time back, to rule with complete authority. We approach Pangkalan-Soesoeh ; this name means " landing-place of the Milky river." The tremendous petroleum industry is here spread out before our eyes. There rise the tanks, distinguished by letters or numbers ; there the drilling rigs ; right down to the edge of the sea petroleum is to be found in the deepest earth. What is oil ? And whence does it come ? Perhaps oil had its origin in the fatty portions and bones of pre-historic animals whose carcases have sunk into the deep strata of the earth and there turned to stone.

Yonder lies the *Sultan of Koetei*, a tank-ship that has come to take in benzine for Singapore, which is here known as " the other side." The benzine is taken straight from the reservoir into the tanks of the ships by a long colossal system of pipes laid on the ground, right down to the sea ; this is the " Loading in Bulk," in contradistinction to the " Packed Load," in the coloured tins which we shall soon see made in the tin factory. The Fields Manager, and the Chief Drilling Superintendent of Aroe-Bay, will accompany us. Notices prohibiting smoking are, of course, posted up everywhere. We are shown the battery of boilers, the packing warehouse, the new central pump station, and the tremendous system of pipes, straight down to the sea, and the tank-ships. Two motors

drive the pumps, which suck the benzine out of the tanks and pump it into the ships. The waste fuel, which is the superfluous gas left after the extraction of the benzine, is burned in the atmosphere, causes the strange glow which we had already seen from on board—for over there, a week ago, we had been sailing through the Straits of Malacca, on board the *Prins der Nederlanden* and saw the glow on the horizon.

Past the repair shops for the machinery we go to the tin factory. The head, Mr. Van der Zeep, who has been here for years, keen and indispensable, is going to show me everything. The tin comes from America and England, and in a series of what appear to be to the lay mind miraculous machines—oh! pride of our age!—the sides are cut off, and these sides are cut to an equal length in the trimming machine; if the "hemming machine"—after having folded a "hem" to an equal width amidst a deafening roar—panel-press, top-press and bottom-press have not completed their task for these various parts—bottom, cover, and sides—then a "squeezer" presses the four sides evenly together, when a soldering machine is brought into service to weld the top and bottom to the four sides.

After this process, these hollow cubes wander away like living creatures to the places where the top and bottom are soldered, and thus the complete tin is formed. It is like magic, you could scarcely believe it if you did not see it before your eyes. A final soldering by hand with a soldering-iron assures the strength of the tin and the handle, and screwed tops are manufactured—hey presto!—before your astonished gaze and fastened to the famous petrol tin. In what Indian house, in what Indian garden, has a petrol tin not become a household necessity! Three thousand wire handles per day! It makes my head reel, but Mr. Van der Zeep is without mercy, and the tins, obstinate as living creatures, as "tinned souls," wander away on a conveyer to the filling station. Are they really not alive, and is it really just machinery? When shall we, foolish men, no, *clever* men, learn to live, eat, breathe,

and to thank God for our existence by machinery?

This is no time to mock, and it would be ungrateful, too. I follow the petrol tins as they glide out of sight in a long row, like glimmering ghosts. Crown oil, Langkat, Kerosin or lamp oil, Shell motor oil. . . . It is overwhelming. Why have I not found all this out, pondered over it, taken part in its development from the drilling to the dispatch tins of the finished product, instead of now, after hundreds, no, thousands, of people have grown wealthy from it, standing by with a pencil and notebook in my hand, and trying to write about it briefly and cleverly! I must, however, not be so concise as to omit to mention that the sample of oil, which is inspected here, must be "free from water."

The factory for the packing-cases. Here are the drums . . . iron casks. What good are the casks to me? There are more interesting things to be seen.

In the filling station there is a sort of merry-go-round as the purposeful tins whirl round and round and are filled. The filled tins after being soldered are "tested" on "test-tables." There is one that leaks. Reject it, and see that the soldering is better next time, so that not a drop shall escape.

I will not detain you, reader, with technical details of this interesting industry, or take you along to the oil transport station whence the crude oil is transported to Pangkalan Brandan, there to be refined, or show you the cool water-station and the cooling towers, from which the precious water describes a complete circuit, so that not a drop goes to waste, but I will only let you hold your hand under the outflowing benzine, which is icy cold to the touch, and very pleasant in the noontide warmth.

I will just take you along to the producing oil-well, from out the depths of which the petroleum gushes by its own force, like a fountain of golden oil! The way thither is scarcely fit for a motor, and on the return journey even our carriage refuses almost obstinately to emerge from the muddy ruts. There we are stuck, getting out and in, shoved on a bit by Chinese coolies, once more out

and in again. At last a lorry is got to take us home. We emerge, thanks to the energy of a young driller, who himself takes the steering wheel—this is only an old motor and the chauffeur can't get much music out of it—to a better bit of road And at last, well after midday, we fall on lunch which is waiting for us at Pangkalan Soesoeh, where, by chance, the officers of the *Sultan of Koeti* are sitting—not a Sultan, but a tankship. The captain, chief engineer, and first officer, whose acquaintance I make, reproach me violently that I have no time to inspect the tankship lying yonder in the Bay. Which reproach was, perhaps, well merited: a tankship is interesting to see and to describe; finally, however, we ended in a reconciliation and a friendly chat over a glass of port.

VIII

The flute-player who plays so beautifully upon his sroenai, that he wanders from compound to compound to play to all melancholy people, was young—but he seemed quite old, quite an old man in spite of his few years. He had grown old so early because he had sung away the troubles of so many people in so many compounds. All the vexations of other people had fallen upon himself.

When he came at dusk to play on his sroenai, he brought his bantal-tikar with him, his pillow rolled up in a mat. And he lay down as though he were tired, under the palm trees near the pond, and played like this, lying down, because only lying down could he give us his melancholy tunes. And his melancholy playing, which was borrowed from the sadness of many people, would for days dispel the gloom of his listeners. He, himself, although he was young, would grow older after these nights, much older and much more gloomy. . . for once again, all the trouble had fallen upon him.

Gloom, like a great bat, hangs in the air of these countries, especially in the hours of twilight, above the head and the souls of men. And they bow, resigned, beneath this oppression, small as they are, with all their sorrow, betwixt primeval forest and volcanoes, the deep earth and the high heavens. Mystery below and Mystery above.

To-day I will tell you of a visit which made a great impression upon me. The story will probably touch many of you, too, and leave others indifferent. But, however

this may be, I feel it a duty to tell you of my visit to Laoe-si-Momo. The name may signify "bubbling water," but if it should mean anything else it does not matter very much. I will tell you about the village that I saw, Koeta-Keriakèn, the Village of Joy.

The Village of Joy is a leper settlement. It lies in a broad valley between the hills, and when we got there the air was blue, the hills were turning a soft blue, and there was a foliage of bananas and palms, green and gold, just the same as in other countries, where the sun shines and where there are no lepers. But here in this village, in this Village of Joy, the lepers live together, and the beauty of land and sky was round them as elsewhere.

Perhaps I do not always take a sympathetic view of the work of missionaries. It is my firm conviction that Christian worship on account of its maxim—which is incomprehensible for primitive people—"Love thy neighbour as thyself"—were not those the words of Jesus, on which all his teaching rests?—is not one for people who have not learnt and thought and felt. To go from Fetishism, from Animism, without any transition, not even by way of simple, soul-inspiring nature worship, into the pure, spiritual and emotional ideal of Christianity seems to me to be quite unattainable for the primitive soul. When I see this attained, it always appears to me as if it were "acquired" but not really felt and understood.

All these scruples, however, were swallowed up in emotion and wonder on that sunny morning when I visited the leper settlement of Laoe-si-Momo. And there I saw what Mr. Van den Berg began in 1906, and what Mr. Van Eelen carried on for the cure and comfort of an extensive colony of our fellow-men suffering from that sickness which the healthy man, since ancient times and the middle ages, has regarded with fear and horror. In 1802, the Chief Administrator of the Deli-Maatschappij at that time had already suggested having missionaries sent to Deli. It was well worth trying to get a population with a higher moral consciousness, who would no longer be murderers or incendiaries. For the Battas, the

Karoe-Battas of these Karoe Lands, were very antagonistic to the European element.

It is a race apart, and on whom the Moslem-Malays, and especially the Javanese, look down very much. They are before everything Animists; they worship the souls of their ancestors. They do not recognise any real divinity. Their Sjamanen—priests—can call up a divine soul in themselves; Sjamanen-women in ecstasy can dance with snakes and can twist like snakes.

Soothsayers read out of old books on astrology and from the entrails of chickens. Their character is quite different from that of other Malays. They are witty, which other Malays seldom are, and have a sense of humour. They are conceited and talented; they are orators and noted chess-players. There is a chess-king in Medan who is called Si-Narsar. The game of chess, which had its origin in further India, is centuries old. They are at the same time often singers, dancers, poets and story-tellers. It is less laudable to have to state that they are often disgustingly dirty; I can only hint at it in a very delicate manner when I take you to visit a Batta-compound. The pig—the beast abhorrent to the Moslem—and the dog are their domestic animals, and more.

Leprosy appeared amongst these people. Any affected person was turned out of the village—the "Koeta." He would wander round and die of hunger, in misery. Mr. Van den Berg began by building little low, bamboo huts here and there, where the unhappy creatures could shelter from the sun and rain. Their relations were supposed to bring them food. When the relations forgot to do so the lepers joined together in a hunger riot and ran all over the country. And in this beautiful land of sun, of gold and green trees, there was this black misery, this cruelty and wretchedness.

The Battas were cannibals. Up till a very short time ago it is stated that human flesh was sold in the market. In 1907, thieves and adulterers were bound to a stake, slaughtered from behind, and, still half-alive and twitching convulsively, they would be hacked to pieces and

devoured. A combatant in the war which was always being waged between the villages would kill his wounded fellow-combatant and eat him up. A piece of cheek or hand were considered dainty morsels. I have in my possession the photograph of an old man who had eaten human flesh. There are many of them still round about. There was no reverence for the ancient of days. An old father or grandfather was made to climb up into a tree. They would then shake the branches, singing "the fruit is ripe, the fruit is ripe!" When at length the old man fell from the tree he was killed and perhaps devoured. His skull was then preserved, out of piety, in a sort of cage in the tree. The missionaries appeared in the midst of all these horrors. Who can feel anything but admiration for them? Every scruple vanished here before the Christian magnificence of their work. St. Francis of Assisi went amongst the lepers to console them. I can only compare our missionaries with the greatest of all Christians.

Three hundred and forty patients live together here. Two hundred of them are baptised. They are greatly touched by the fact that Jesus Christ healed the lepers. The festival of Christmas is a great feast for these people. But over Pharaoh, who was swallowed up by the Red Sea, over little David, who slew the giant Goliath, they chuckle with a barbarous joy. In other leper settlements —there is one by the Deli River at Labuan—the compound is surrounded with barbed wire. Here there is no barbed wire, only a line scratched along the ground. The lepers do not go beyond this line. And here they intermarry. They are allowed to marry as long as it is not with near relations. The head of the village is consulted in these questions. If they have hands and feet, they are allowed to wed. Some of them have no hands or feet, merely stumps.

There is no poverty here. Everyone has his bit of ground and their families no longer forget, when necessary, to bring them food. Sometimes the sick recover. When once—after being examined by Dr. Schuffner, who is

Minang-kabau young married woman with curious head-cloth.

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very much looked up to in Sumatra—four patients were to be officially discharged from the settlement, and allowed to return to the compound, they begged to remain in the settlement. We are shown the shop where they can buy things. On the one side the healthy people can buy, and on the other, the sick. They do not cross the line and the money with which they pay is immediately disinfected. The shop was opened recently ; a church is now being built. Amongst eighty families married here there are only four children. The leprous woman is not very fruitful ; these unfortunate creatures, however, are ardent in their love.

There they come ! They know that strangers are arriving, and they recognise the Governor who sometimes visits them and greet us with their long-sustained " tabè." Mr. van Eelen is a young father to them all. There is gratitude in their salutation. Their malformed faces, often as broad as the head of a lion, are at first very serious then expanding into a smile, which pierces one's heart. Only very close contact can cause infection and there is no immediate danger of this on a visit.

We pass through their compound. They accompany us with their drum—they are all clad in the dark indigo-blue of the Battas—and they always take care to stand to the windward of us, so that the breeze may not carry any germ towards us. Whenever a wind gets up they quickly crowd to the other side. Miserable creatures ! They follow us about with their eyes, especially Mr. van Eelen, who knows them each by name. They work. They have their little field. They do the necessary smith's work. They want to remain here always, they say, for they have no very pleasant recollection of their village, when they were cast out, the healthy ones often going for them with choppers. They display the wounds caused by the wrath of their relatives. Here they would like to live and die. If their hands fall off, then they will have the implements bound to their stumps. Over there I see a man creeping along the ground ; his feet have gradually fallen off ; he is still making bird-cages and

wooden shelves. They are human beings, human bodies, and round about their black misery is the sunshine, the golden green paradise of Eden.

The country is lovely amongst the hills. Over there Sibajak is smoking from out its sulphurous crater. The sky is blue above. Woods are being planted yonder to make a new compound ; there are already new houses of bamboo basket-work. Further up lies the churchyard, and there you may read again and again " si—mate . . . " There, at last, their misery is over. They have died in sanctity. They believed in a God who perhaps chastised them, but who, after their death, will receive them, well and beautiful, into His paradise.

Who would grudge them this comfort ?

Dogs and pigs are not loathsome scavengers here as they are in other Batta compounds ; all rubbish is burnt in deep holes. On Saturday they change their clothes ; and there is a washing-place where everything is disinfected, and Mrs. van Eelen has the self-imposed task of superintending this laundry.

That man, with the broad lion-face, is their chief. Over there are the youths' quarters ; full-grown youths sleep together in accordance with the Batta usage and no longer under the parental roof ; it lies close by the line drawn on the ground, which is the separation or mark which the lepers are not allowed to cross.

They call their " tabè ! " after us. We disinfect the soles of our shoes and then go with Mr. van Eelen to his house for a moment, over there in the midst of the beautiful landscape—golden green trees under a deep azure sky. It is a house built like a Batta house, with the horned roof ; on the buffalo horns hang earthenware rice-pots with some money and grains of rice to appease the wicked spirits. With a smile, the missionary had retained these details in building his house. Very curious are the conventional lizard-motives in the wicker-work which hold the planks together, without a single nail. Black, red and white are the carved motives which adorn the house outside, coloured with clay. Within, a sober simplicity. A few

texts on the wall. A few missionaries, and Mr. van den Berg, now the teacher out there, with their wives and sisters, and Mr. and Mrs. van Eelen. They are both young, fair, strong and healthy and in the bloom of youth. The joy of their calling glows from their eyes. A smile is on their lips.

They have children who were, I believe, away at that time, but not always.

I then took leave of them, very much moved. It is my greatest happiness to look for Beauty along my path. That morning I had seen sickness and deformity. Nevertheless, it was still a Village of Joy, as the poor deformities themselves call their home. And I had also seen Beauty after that, in this young pair of noble people who were dedicating the whole of their youth and strength to those who had been disinherited of all beauty, and who were caring for them, healing them, and teaching them of the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . And this Beauty touched all that was most human in me, and so deeply that I could not restrain my tears when I bade them farewell.

As we approached the pasangrahan, where we were going to stay, we heard in the distance the flute-player playing on his sroenai : it was growing dusk, and, old before his time from all the sorrow that he had sung away from men, he lay there, on his bantal-tikar, by the pond under the palm, and played and played the sadness away from the people who, squatting around him, listened for hours throughout long nights.

IX

The Batta-compound, to which I will take you, is called Poeloe-Pajoeng. The visit of the Governor has been announced and, consequently, when we arrive the pigs and dogs have done their work as scavengers, presumably better than usual. In order to finish with this disgusting topic as soon as possible I will only tell you that all clearing up and cleaning is done by these beasts. The compound is really passably clean. The houses are very curious, built on poles, with a very high atap roof, which rises to a point to left and right ; the roof is often a good many feet higher than the sides themselves : you cannot talk about walls. The wooden sides are always joined together by means of basketwork with a lizard design.

Sometimes there is a carved snake twisting its way through a hatch under the roof. This snake watches over the soul of the sleeping inhabitants during the night ; otherwise, it might escape bit by bit under the influence of evil spirits. The " idjoek," a black, hairy fibre, which grows in the axil of the arenga palm leaves, is used as roof covering. Earthenware jars with money and rice hang from the buffalo horns, which jut out from the points of the roof. A little wooden staircase serves as the entrance to the house.

The house is spacious, for eight families live together in a so-called " soekoe."

This living together is prescriptive usage ; a fire, which is never extinguished, serves as a joint oven. Each family has a room, which is more or less shut off ; sometimes a piece of cloth isolates the parents' couch :

the children sleep in front of it. But the boys, when grown to man's estate, do not sleep there but in the youths' hut, or on a seat, under a roof ; in fact, anywhere. On seeing the compound one is immediately struck by the curious outline of the house, with its large, very sloping, black-haired roof, with the buffalo horns. Small rice barns and hen-houses on poles look like tall slender hives. The men and women wear indigo, and their fingers are always stained with this paint, into which they dip their linen.

Not far off, and where the indigo plant grows, you will see the paint pots. Dogs and pigs run about these dark houses and darker people. The pigs especially remind one of the fact that the natives are not Moslems, and their Animism is almost godless. They are not a beautiful race, and not attractive in either face or figure ; there is something coarse about them ; only very young girls are sometimes slenderly built ; they are bought by their men. We saw a pretty young woman, for whom an old Batta paid her parents 450 guilders ; she told us this with pride. They wear their Kaïns drawn tight across the chest, a piece of blue cloth over the shoulder, and their headcloth is pleated in some curious way about the head into a massive cushion which juts out into a horn in front.

They wore that day golden chains, bangles and rings fashioned in a most singular manner. Round, golden decorations, such as little flat mugs and dishes, stood out from these rings and bracelets and chains. They also wear most peculiar, massive silver ear-ornaments, like a double silver coil or two question marks forged together ; one is under the cloth where it drags and tortures the ear, the other stands up against the head-cloth and is attached to a flap of it. White and pale-green shoots of the penang palm are stuck like little pearl tassels among the cushion-like, curved head-dress. We could see how one of these girls suffered under this heavy ear-decoration, which she took off with difficulty and which weighed over two pounds in our hand.

Among the men who were walking about were several cannibals, and one old man with a typically cruel face had been a notorious robber. When they sit down they use as a mat the pretty neck-skin of one of the spirited Batta ponies. On either side of the skin is the mane, which serves as a fringe; chairs were placed on mats for us. The village chief had cut-up coconuts handed round to us: the "water" of these young coconuts is a delicious drink.

The village chief, or rather "landscape" ruler, was addressed as Si-Bajak, the Exalted One, the same name as the mountain with its sulphur chasm. He looked very simple in spite of his magnificent title. There was singing and playing, and there were dances by two men, by four girls, by two girls and a man; slow, straight, symmetrical movements. A soft gong, two gendangs (little drums of Nangka-wood covered with the skin of a dwarf-deer) a higher sroenai (hobo); the music was gentle and rhythmic. There were also clowns, who did a comic dance; they grimaced and, I believe, they were imitating the more graceful girls' dances. They were a great success; the Battas laughed and were most appreciative. The fencing dance was very curious, too. The whole thing made an interesting ethnographical scene: with the dark, sloping roofs, the dark, indigo crowd, the black or brown faces; the pigs—there were several sows and their families—who sniffed about among the houses. Naked, and half-naked, boys had climbed on to the beams of the houses and looked down at the dances, grinning.

We have decided to go by motor from Brastagi, along the Lake of Toba to the Padang Uplands. It is possible to do this famous expedition in five days, but I fear that I should see very little in so short a time, so we intend to stop here and there for a few days, and will begin with Pematang Siantar. The road there is very beautiful, as is all this country. The town itself rivals Medan, but is still new; perhaps it is not too much to say that when Mr. Westenberg, who did a great deal for

this country, came as first Assistant-Resident, he still found cannibals.

The municipality of Pematang Siantar only dates from 1917. Wide streets and roads were immediately built, in order to ensure for the town a future as a centre of Rubber Companies. The first one was started in 1910. The hotel is very good; the Town Hall has charm. The Assistant-Resident of Sirneloengan and the Karoe lands, acting as my guide, showed me two huge chessmen made of stone, a king and presumably a castle. With these chess-men, of which these two gigantic pieces are the remains, the rulers of Nagoer and Batango played chess; the game lasted a year, and was played on a wide upland plain. The immense pieces for each move were shifted by slaves. The stake was twelve slaves. One of these monarchs possessed a golden set of chess-men; once the enemy appeared on the horizon and the monarch's courtiers, in a panic, threw the pieces into the midst of the enemy, who immediately set up the golden pieces and began to play; all war was forgotten.

I am shown the boarding-school where the sons of inland chiefs are educated as future "landscape" rulers. They are boys from the age of seven to fourteen: I see their beds and their meal of rice at the Dutch-Inland school, where I hear a few of them sing a Dutch song. When they are fourteen or fifteen years old they go to the Government Bureaux.

That evening I went with the Governor to Tebing-Tinggi where I have been invited to lecture. It is a rubber centre, and in the evening we hastened there in the car. Nothing could be more mysterious than this motor run, lasting over an hour, rushing through dark lanes between the rubber plantations, sometimes through pools of water, which had flooded the road, the water dashing up against us. And after the lecture, back again by faint moonlight through rain-clouds, whilst the night swallow, hiding on the road, with strange, phosphorescent gleaming eyes, flies away in the white glow of our lanterns. Both Javanese chauffeurs—there are two who will relieve each

other on the long journey—gaze straight ahead ; sitting behind them we see four attentive trembling ears. I believe that could we see into their hearts we should find that they are more afraid of oran-boenian (ghosts) than of tigers.

" Are there tigers here ? " I ask my host, who was kind enough to accompany me. The question makes him talk, and he is a born story-teller. I will repeat to you these tales about tigers as I heard them on this wonderful moonlight night in the car.

The wild beast is sometimes the friend of man here, and mankind, in Sumatra, is still akin to the virgin forest. These strange sympathies often weave themselves into a mystery, which we can believe or deny as the spirit moves us. All over the Malay lands, I am told, where the klaxon has not disturbed peace and the myth, the natives believe in compound-tigers, who do no harm, but, on the contrary, protect. At Boeo in the Padang Uplands an opening has been made in the stout fence beside the stables of the district-officers, because the tiger was in the habit of passing that way during the night : should the tiger find the opening closed, he would revenge himself on horses, cattle or people.

My host tells me that in 1901 he was walking in a native forest in Achin with two guides, who were rhinoceros hunters. They showed him their hut, which had a roof but no walls : the ashes of the fire were fresh and so were a number of tiger footmarks round about the hut.

" Are you not afraid of the motley ancestor ? " the guides were asked. " For did not the souls of the ancestors frequently transmigrate in tiger form ? " But one of the guides smiled with conviction and indicating his friend said : " After all, *he* is the pawang-rimboe, the head of the forest, and his tiger-familiar watches over him."

Round about the little open hut there were undoubtedly the traces of a tiger.

In 1902 the administration-lieutenant, Polak, shot a

Rice-barns in Padang Uplands.

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Bengal tiger near Koeta-Radja on a spot where tigers had never been seen. He was shooting snipe on the sawah-strip, 1,000 M. wide, opened as a precautionary measure. At a very small wood on the edge of the strip he suddenly saw a very large tiger looking at him placidly. As it happened the officer had a ball cartridge in his pocket, although he was after snipe with shot. He did not move, while the beast turned its head calmly, then, like a flash of lightning, he loaded his gun with a ball cartridge and shot the tiger from a short distance right through the heart. The next morning he came with the skin to enquire whether he had a right to the tiger premium. Some months later there were to be races at Koeta-Radja. When Tengkoe Radja Itam, the famous Oeloebolang, was asked if the Kedjoeroean of Lhong would bring his horses, Tengkoe Radja Itam answered, after much shy smiling . . . that the Kedjoeroean would probably not dare to come to Koeta-Radja because his tiger-familiar had been killed on his last visit to Koeta-Radja : the beast had evidently got lost and had been seen by man. . . . " Do you remember that an officer shot a tiger near Koeta-Radja ? " my host was asked.

Do we believe in tigers-familiar ? Who would be so foolish ? Let us own that the virgin forest and the primeval soul of the Sumatra man remain riddles to us Westerners. . . . But what if you are hunting for tigers in the native forest and you think you hear a tiger roar, and your Malay hunter, contradicting you with a smile, says calmly, " That is not the tiger which we are trying to shoot . . . that is the compound-tiger which protects us. Listen ! that is the tiger for which we are hunting ! " And a second roar resounds. . . . What then ? Well, if you are a Westerner you will not believe, even then. . . .

You will not believe in crocodiles-familiar, either. And yet the Rajah of Loeboe-Oelang-Aling, a mighty robber in the Padang Uplands during the latter years of last century—was believed by the population to have a crocodile-familiar who followed him on all his voyages.

"Oh, we do not believe in any of these strange things!" I am told on this moonlight night in the car; but in spite of myself I glance back at the road along which we are flying, to see if . . . perchance . . . a tiger-familiar is following us. . . .

X

Such a morning is unforgettable. First of all by motor to close by Tiga-Dolok (Three Hills) and then on foot with the Governor, who shows much interest in your correspondent, oh, *Haagsche Post*, to a strange, holy place, which is either Batta, or Hindu . . . who can say? We pass through fields of long grass, where a path has been cleared, for the shrine cannot be reached by motor. It was getting very warm, and, full of the tiger stories of the day before, I asked:

"Don't tigers lurk about here when it begins to grow dusk?" Yes, of course, they come here. Suddenly we see, not a tiger as yet, but a Batta, accompanied by someone who follows close behind.

It happens to be the Rajah of Tiga-Dolok with his votary. And the Rajah recognises the Governor and clasps his hands in astonishment.

"Why did not the Governor announce his visit to me?"

"It is of no consequence," answered Mr. Westenenk.

This is not an official visit. The Rajah looks anything but princely. He has, over his sarong, a white jacket very worn about the sleeves, and his teeth, according to the Batta custom, are filed away on the top, giving him a horrible mouth, stained a purplish red with betel.

"Is the gentleman coming to see the stone grottos again?" the Rajah asks in secret dismay.

The answer is in the affirmative. "Will he be coming many more times to look at the grottos and the statues?"

No doubt the answer is once more in the affirmative.

"Then, henceforth, I will see that the path is better kept," cries the Rajah, slightly suspicious of such lasting interest on the part of the Dutch in a few holes in a rock and a couple of weather-beaten lumps of stone in the shape of a human form.

He had thought after the stones had been visited once or twice they might as well be covered by the rampant growth of ferns, even though the spot were kramat (holy).

And the Rajah whispers something into the ear of his follower, and the follower sets off in front of us in a great hurry.

A fresh surprise, but . . . still no tiger! A very big hornbill, with wide, fluttering wings, flies over the neglected road, from right to left.

"A good omen," says the Rajah, now visibly relieved, being at first afraid of a reprimand on account of the badly-kept road. If the bird had flown from left to right, it might have meant bad luck. . . .

What a great, majestic bird. If it were shot by mistake by some fool then the Rajah will die, or at least his son. And in order to appease the soul of the bird, a play is given. An actor holds forth with a cloth over his head, and a beak in front, to represent the bird.

"Tigers? Oh yes, surely," the Rajah replies to my repeated question. "Yesterday they robbed me of a cow."

We are not disturbed by any tiger; it is not the time of day. The splendid hornbill has flown away into the blue. Here is the compound—they are Timoer-Battas who live here—and the house of the Rajah, and his rice barn, and his wife. Rajah, house, shed, and wife are all very, very plain; I could not possibly find anything beautiful about them. Nevertheless, this Rajah is the ruler of the "landscape."

His servant has done his duty as we proceed along the grilling road. A couple of men have been hastily set to work to make the road to the shrine passable.

It is indeed very peculiar. What is it? What was

it ? Can it be Hindu ? Is it Batta ? Or neither ? A strange, mysterious atmosphere hangs about this place, sunk a little between the slopes of the primeval forest. A river meanders into sight and vanishes again between the rocks. A ridge of tufa looks like a wall, like a rampart, a formless mass of something which was never built, but formed by nature, and which the primitive people who lived here no doubt made into a sort of sanctuary, for numberless, little, worn steps, now scarcely passable, are hewn in the stone. We mounted, but because the steps were scarcely passable, I made use of the moving rail as I climbed up the mass of tufa. The moving rail was composed of a long bamboo stick held by various Battas ; the Battas, barefoot, ran quickly up the slope with the bamboo held slanting, and up the worn and holy steps, whilst I was able to grasp, with my hand, the railing which wandered along with me.

The Battas also supported my stick when I planted it on the ground ; they even gripped my foot itself when it slipped on the muddy tufa, amongst ferns and snakes, and in this manner I reached the top of the sanctuary. At the summit was a little " stupa," or dome, with an enormous salamander carved by the side. But whether there was anything inside the dome I do not know. Carved in the stone was a cobra crawling up the rock ; the head, in particular, was very easily distinguishable.

Further up again, the gruesome form of an immense frog or toad, overgrown with moss. There were also two figures, the one of a man and the other of a woman, clumsy and primitive, dating from a period entirely devoid of art. The human form only slightly indicated, weather-beaten, worn, decayed, and overgrown by great big ferns which had been hacked away in order to allow us to see it better. Because of the form of an elephant in the stone on the other side of the dashing river, this spot, which is kramat (holy), is called Batoe Gadjah (Elephant's stone). It was visited by many people. The Rajah's old grandmother and aunts and his three little

sons approached, carrying in their hands purple darang flowers which they gave us.

Very interesting were the niches and grottos between the worn steps, hewn out of the rock. What did these niches and grottos once contain? Statues or . . . hermits and musers? It is possible that there were primitive statues in them, the same as we found up above, god and goddess, man and woman. It is more probable that hermits sat in those niches, in spite of their smallness, gazing downwards; or musers who had lost consciousness in a physical immovability and complete detachment from earthly things. Perhaps a pious multitude had in bygone days mounted the steps one by one, perhaps they had worshipped the hermits and musers as they squatted in those niches, gazing into space, without seeing the things of this earth. Their shrunken emaciated limbs, perhaps, were just able to fit in those narrow confines. They had grown deformed; they no longer moved; they were scarcely human, worn out with fasting, no longer fed save with grains of rice, brought to them by pious pilgrims. They needed no more than a grain.

Perhaps when their eyes protruded from their sockets and foam appeared upon their withered lips for the last time, the pilgrims would bring them a few drops of river-water in a coconut-shell. Perhaps they allowed their lips to be moistened, perhaps they drank without being conscious of it. Perhaps they died within their niches in an ecstasy, and their limbs as I picture it to myself, were dragged from their holes and buried with ceremony. And perhaps other musers and hermits who had long been waiting by the river took the places of the dead, established themselves, in their turn, in the narrow grottos, grew deformed from immovability, gazed and died a lingering death in the ecstasy of their soul. . . .

I am becoming phantastic. Perhaps it was so, and perhaps it was otherwise. Nothing is known of this strange place, over which still hangs the mysterious devotion of ecstasy and piety, long since fled, along these scarcely-visible steps. But truly—as may be seen at a

glance—thousands have come on pious errands, and have cleansed themselves in the river and mounted the steps. . . .

Did they offer flowers and incense to the elephant, serpent, salamander and frog ? To the man and woman, the clumsy god and goddess up there amongst the ferns ? Who shall say with more certainty than that offered by my phantasy, who they were, who came here, and what took place here in the still, mysterious dawn of worship and art ? . . .

There is a crawling snake, and large gaudy butterflies flutter slowly about us, as though the splendour of their wings were too heavy for them. . . .

And the Rajah shows us a crystal talisman, a round marble ; when this is laid on the topmost point of the shrine the ball will glow like fire. . . . Full of polite attention we look at the talisman, and naturally do not ask to have the marble put in the sun, which might show doubt in the Rajah's word. . . . We wander down the tiger path, back to the motor ; bamboo stood high around us and the bread-fruit tree shed its withered, rustling leaves about our feet. It was a morning full of strange things, all merging harmoniously into the brilliant, quivering sunshine.

And since present-day life has its interests no less than the strange riddle of the far-away, impenetrable past, I will, after having spoken of antiquity, chat to you about the very modern colonisation of coolies who have been dismissed by the various companies during these critical times. It is at Pematang Bandar, which I think, a few months ago, was nothing but a wilderness, and which now is a flourishing compound, where Javanese immigrants have acquired, in addition to their houses, each an individual bit of land on which to build, and on which vegetables, obi, sugar-cane and maize thrive abundantly, whilst the bread-fruit and capok-tree—the former has great rustling leaves, and the latter white flakes of fluff bursting from the seed pod—rise amongst the bamboo houses. They seem to be happy there, these Javanese,

and, in spite of nostalgia, do not wish to go back to their own land, to Java, where, on account of over-population and also on account of the general depression, they will probably never be able to effect an independent existence as simple agriculturists.

Later on they will be given a rice-field, for which water-rates must be paid ; a little school has already been built for them.

The Javanese Colony makes a good impression. A few months ago these colonists arrived here, miserable, starving, and without a thing ; now they are to a certain extent prosperous land-owners. It is not necessary to be wealthy and to own provinces in order to be happy. A little bamboo house with a baleh-baleh, a piece of land, a rice-field in prospect, a coconut tree, a banana tree, a vegetable field, some sugar-cane and maize. What more does a simple soul want than to live happily with the wife of his choice who is clad in a gay sarong, knotted over her bosom, surrounded by this magnificent Nature, amongst hills and rivers, between sky and abyss, sunshine and torrents ? He does not wish for more than to see his children, who a short time ago were dying of hunger, rolling amongst the chickens on the ground and in the grass, their little round bellies filled with rice. He smiles with contentment and is aware that he has found happiness, whilst we, oh reader, you and I, wish for a thousand other things which we do not need at all, but which we consider indispensable and which make our lives difficult.

And who is the greatest philosopher ? My hermit, who wedged himself into the narrow grotto in order to indulge in ecstatic dreams far away from all earthly things, or the Javanese colonist of Sumatra who is satisfied with his little hut and his patch of land ?

XI

The great deed is done—the monumental tour right across Sumatra, from Medan, past the Lake of Toba, to the Padang Uplands and Padang! The triumph of the king of the road—Motor—over what was mountain and native forest, and is still little else, became an accomplished fact—I mean for us—and we crow our victory loudly. The expedition about which we have been told so much has not been disappointing, and, besides that, it has been a triumphal tour without a single hitch, not even a minor one: a triumphal tour of three weeks. For we did not hurry to gain our victory. If you want to overcome, as we did, you can quite well do it in four or five days, but I call that victory and devouring Kilometers at the same time, and I like to digest my victories, and to enjoy in retrospect the following day the thousandfold beauties which an expedition of this sort gives me.

After our wonderful steppe—desert—and mountain expeditions in Africa, I was a little afraid of disillusionment. But Sumatra is quite different. Whilst in Africa there was stern, forbidding soberness, this was majestic, beautiful and grand. It was a great joy to have this sublime, awe-inspiring scene, like an epic in which the Toba lake seemed an idyll—a sweet poem in the midst of the titanic force of an epic about mountains and forests—surrounding us for three weeks. The weather-gods blessed us. Although the rains often threatened—Sumatra does not have a monsoon like Java—we motored past the rain floods and through the gathering clouds and could not count a single day lost on account of rain.

Our small "Essex," driven by these pearls among Javanese chauffeurs—Iman and Tahir—gained the victory, without becoming despondent even for one moment. There was not a single puncture, and Tahir was not called upon once to give us a display of his mechanical knowledge. Our triumphal chariot went up the hills like a bird, past precipices and perils. We looked into the former, but did not think of the latter. As a matter of fact, the precipices could not always be seen, for thick branches and leaves often concealed the heights and depths from our gaze until suddenly, at a bend, we become aware of the astonishing ravines along which we were rolling and swinging, under the guidance of Tahir and Iman.

It was the awe-inspiring beauty of a primeval, volcanic world, which by reason of its cataclysms has remained a paradise of giants and gods. In the midst of it all lies the Toba Lake like a blue jewel, shining brightly amongst the almost pearl-white upright cliffs. We have certainly not been told too much about all this, and I can tell you but too little of it, for the beauty of the hills, of the immense masses of trees, the melting of the horizon into golden noon or violet evening, and the overwhelming of the driving clouds, through which your motor has to pass, cannot be conveyed in our poor too-often spoken words. Would that I had a fresh vocabulary! I am, however, not richer than I am. And I shall endeavour, from my small wealth of words, to choose those which to some extent shall reflect the beauty of this tour, rolling along always well-kept roads.

Seriboe Dolok, they are the Thousand Hills. In the cool season they may be seen, green and undulating; they have not been counted, but roughly estimated and then named with the number, which, with poetic licence, reveals their uncountableness. They fade away in light and air, the horizon always stretching into the dim distance.

Suddenly along the road come some Battas, leading a string of beautiful ponies, lively little animals, with

arched necks and fiery eyes and movements. With their strain of Sandalwood, these Batta ponies are a splendid breed. The young animals are let loose in the great plains to grow and then are caught again. They rear as we go by, pulling freely at the controlling hand of the men; they strain and tug and neigh and snort.

Over the hills grows rampant the Indian reed grass and the feather grass, useless to the native: he may perhaps be able to weave it into a bird-cage for his beloved turtle-dove. No plant is proof against the alang-alang which abounds, spreading over everything, whilst tall feather-grass raises its plume-like bosses on high. It makes me think of tigers, as here they could shelter so beautifully, with their heads just visible—the regal beasts.

But the motor, as it shoots onward, is also a king in its own way. And at evening, it must not be supposed that he, whose striped skin resembles shadow and yellow-grass stems, should dare to reveal his hate towards that new beast, ever fleeing along the roads, snorting and screaming at every bend, as though a hidden danger were hastening towards it. . . .

We see the first rice-fields, "ladangs," those which are laid out "dry": not until later, towards the South, shall we see the liquid terraces which are so much more beautiful, where the padi (rice) is planted with sacred piety, plant after tender plant, in the fruitful earth, always flooded with water. But the melting outline of the mountains comforts us with the thought that the delectable rice-fields are still far off. The Sinaboeng, the Boeatan, and the Piso-Piso rise up and fade away behind the green Thousand Hills, looming up once more in a tender haze of illusive blue against the apparently more tangible sky. It is the light itself—it is a transitory mist, which seems to make the sky look more palpable than the mountain. You would like to seize hold of the lofty sky, in your foolish arrogance and longing for azure: the mountains however, retreat in apparently intangible mystery. Is not a bird the only creature which finds a solution to this riddle? Does not the hawk—there are

hawks here—alight on the intangible hills and does he not fly up into the sky, whose heights and depths seem infinite ?

But what are those black or bald patches ? Here and there on the hills we notice black, burned-out patches, like dark, cauterised wounds. This is the result of overcropping during many centuries. The native has been in the habit of setting fire to the mountain forests, he plants rice or maize there for a single, rapid harvest, and then leaves the mutilated, plundered spot in order to commit the same offence elsewhere without even giving a thought to the planting of new trees on the mountain-side ; trees, without which the mountain will die in the earth out of which it sprang in a volcanic eruption, bursting forth immediately into luxuriant vegetation. Now there are, everywhere, on those cruelly-martyred mountain-sides, those black patches, dark wounds in the deserted ground, which, however, please the eye by giving a constant variety of sombre tints, blending harmoniously among the luxuriant green. The Piso-Piso stands there, pathetic, treeless and leafless, with naked flanks, only its top covered with what looks like a cap of unattainable forest.

There, among the basalt and green dells, the first blue glimmer of Lake Toba is to be seen ; the table mountains of Samosir, which spreads itself across the lake, rises up wondrously beautiful with its severe, pure, pale-grey straight lines. We approach Perapat, where we are going to stay for a few days because it would be a pity to leave this charming spot in its glorious setting too soon.

What happened here in by-gone ages is the secret of the awful cataclysms—volcanic outbursts and earthquakes—which frequently altered the face of the earth, as if it had been tossed about and shaken by great passions. Originally Lake Toba was an immense crater, in which this island of Samosir, surrounded by the water of the lake, is almost the same shape as the lake, as if masses of rocks had come hurtling from the mountain-top into the crater,

and the lake-water had surrounded these masses without being able to swallow them up.

The lake itself is a comparatively narrow strip of water round an island of basalt, only growing wider as it flows towards the North in the direction of the Piso-Piso. Nothing is left of all these stupendous things but the charming picture which we see, charming yet majestic, for nothing is on a small scale here; and when we call the Lake of Toba charming, we must not forget that a goddess can be charming, too. . . . This charm cannot be compared to that of the Italian or the Swiss Lakes. It is always severe, sober and grand in outline, and although I can see something feminine in the Toba Lake, it is god-like and severe at the same time.

As we speed across the lake, we are constantly surprised by the almost square basins, surrounded by steep white mountains; up above the swallows have their nests. Promontories covered with tall green feather grass jut out. The Passangrahan lies on one of these promontories, the little hotel is quite close. Anyone who likes, may wander down the hill and bathe in the lake. The village with its little harbour, in which on market days a number of "Sampans" collect, lies hidden among coco-palms. Many Batta fishermen live here. Slender proas, with a carved and coloured fish or dragon-design on bow and stern, and square, pale-hued sails, are sharply outlined against light and water. There is scarcely a ripple on the water—these tints are astonishingly vague. We had never pictured such opal softness, which is Oriental still, because it cannot be compared to anything else.

There are numerous creeks and bays. Little islands and green rocks lie, as if forgotten; goats and sheep are led about here and there, on the grassy slope, by small, brown, naked boys, who, while their flocks graze, either bathe or draw water in long bamboos, and, with their full vessels, clamber up the hills like little goats. In the lake lie fishermen's nets, beneath the surface and on bamboo scaffoldings under a little shed in the water, the

slim poles looking like streaks of sepia. Vaguely outlined against the pearly light, the small, dark, shadowy forms of fishermen as they sit and watch their nets can sometimes be seen. Every now and then a wistful whistling comes from the feathery grass.

Our little motor-boat swings in and out of creeks and bays, under the sheer cliffs. The coast-Malays call the water the "tasteless sea." Among the upright, white rocks are caves like the blue grottos of Capri, with almost black shadows in their inmost depths. Long flowery branches of orchids trail almost into the lake. A number of small boys follow us in little boats, made out of the trunks of trees: they row with one oar. These children climb up the cliff, pick the flowers, and tear off the orchids and long lianas. Under the translucent water a strange vegetation grows rampant.

Here are the holy stones, Batoe Gorga, inscribed with blood when a battle had been won; for the natives living on this lake fought each other but a century ago. Roots and mabar-trees reach down into the water, weaving themselves into an airy palisade. We peer from our boat at the curious hieroglyphics on those stones which are annals. They look like little ladders and caves—are they really letters?—and are reflected by the clear, smooth water. We land for a moment at the compound which is quite close to the lake, on another square basin. Four or five houses, some poor fishermen, naked children. When we step into our boat, the little brown boys race after us in their hollow logs, at one with their boat, at one with the water, which is their bath, game, means of livelihood and element. All they require to live is water and a hollow tree trunk.

We speed up the lake—many of the hills seem to have been over-cropped with ladang—ladang is a dry rice-field—in a single rapid harvest, leaving the mountain-flanks naked, as if covered with gaping wounds. These dark patches, however, looking rock-grey, almost blue in the soft light, break the monotony of the rain-drenched green.

The island of Samosir used to be a peninsula, attached by a narrow natural breakwater to the mainland of Tapanveli, which lies over there in the West. On account of the proa-traffic, it was considered advisable to take away this breakwater. But the Battas were afraid that if the "cord" no longer fastened Samosir to the mainland the island would tumble into the water.

A great sedeka (banquet) was given, thirty thousand coolies gathering together from far and near; in one day the natural breakwater was broken through: the peninsula, now the island of Samosir, did *not* tumble into Lake Toba. . . .

There it lies, its grey basalt table-mountains a glowing purple in the reflection of the sinking fire of the setting sun. The proas, the sampans, hollow logs, are like streaks of ink on the purply water, and the whistle which we heard in the morning rises up again from the same feathery grass with a different note; it is as if the whimsical note has changed to one of sad resignation now that the sun is sinking and the moon is silvery—a shadowy disc—and the very first star gleams out from the depths of a rosy sky.

After two days, we continue our triumphal progress.

XII

As we leave Perapat, the road winds through deep ravines away from the sea, but between the clefts we still catch occasional glimpses of the blue Toba bays. Rain threatens, and it is as though we were going into a land of clouds. But our recklessness is once more rewarded by the smile of the sun piercing its way through mists and distant rain-floods. The showers shift about, first to our left, then to our right. And, look! there are the first liquid rice-fields; but later on in Padang we shall see them so beautifully laid out that I would rather show them to you there.

Amongst the trees—bread-fruit and aren, coconut and banana, pinang and tamarind—the little bamboo houses emerge, looking like ships—on account of the shape of their roofs—stranded on a sea of leaves. These ship-like houses are also to be found in Padang even more clearly defined. There lies a blue range of hills, the Pangoeloe-Bao, suddenly appearing through a heavy shower of rain—not a drop fell on us—and if we turned off to the left here, we should find, going along the Assahan River, the noted waterfall, but it is impossible for the motor; our chauffeur Imân—Tahir is driving—points pathetically in that direction. Alas! it is not always possible to attain the beautiful.

The road winds again and again: who could ever count these turnings? Batta women, going to market, walk along the side of the road, always in single file: the upper part of the body bare, the breast quite visible, the long kaïn, especially that of the married women, is draped

round loins and shoulders, according to fancy and not after any definite fashion. And they bear their burdens on their heads—the goods for market—in wicker baskets, round or square, which they fold larger or smaller according to the contents. How well they carry the baskets, with swaying hips and heads held high, whilst they walk so sedately along the road.

In Lagobotti we visit the Rhineland Mission, which has been established here for sixty years, and the missionaries show me very interesting work in cabinet-making. There is a perfectly appointed school for linear-drawing—how faultless are all the architectural designs! Also the weaving school where Batta girls, under the instruction of German sisters, weave their own trousseaux. If only they hadn't done their eurythmic dances so well, and sung Funiculi-funicula, and even Oberon's fairy dance and Boccherini's minuet under the palms, and amongst banana trees! That was certainly not in very good taste, brothers and sisters, but we ought not to blame you for it, if, besides this, you cultivate in these Batta girls, qualities of purity and a desire to work.

And the road winds ever upwards. It is many Kilometers long, an ever-varying scene of beauty. Now that I am writing about it days after, I have a great longing to wind along this beautiful road once more. Is there any danger? Yes, of course there is, unless your chauffeur is very perfect. We climb up to heaven and drop again into a green world. Past clouds, through clouds. . . . Past Baligé—a last glimpse at the blue Toba Lake and Samosir. . . . We glance around. . . . It is all gone, vanished. Toba Lake and Samosir, already behind us—a vanished idyll. We drive as far as Taroetong that day, where we lunch in the rest-house: thanks to the watchful eye of Mr. Simons, the controller, and Mrs. Simons, this rest-house is worthy of all praise.

We leave Taroetong. The youthful hand of a girl offers my wife some heliotrope which she herself has raised in this cool temperature. The delicate little flowers fill the motor with their fragrance. The arrival

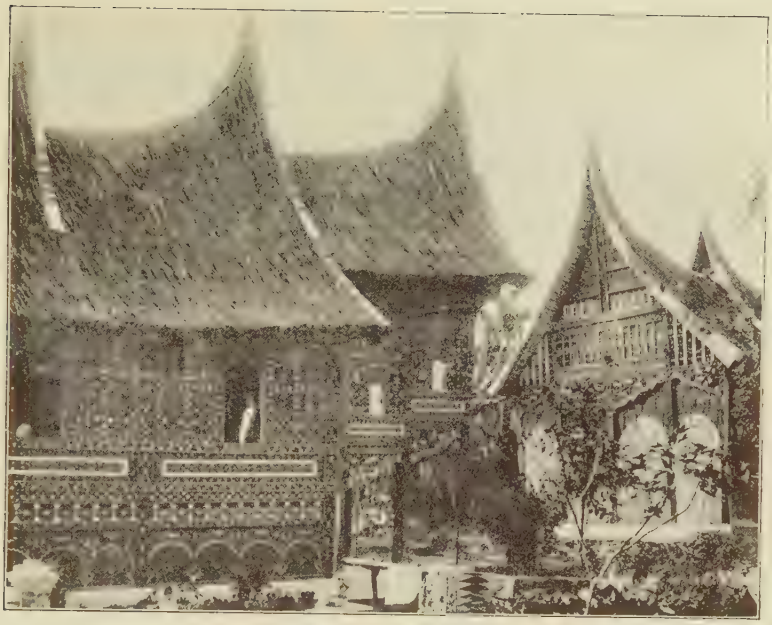
and departure for us tourists is always so delightful at all these places. A little like a triumphal progress. And everything passes so quickly, so quickly. . . . Again and again we make acquaintance with friendly people, but the parting follows so closely on the welcome.

We are now on our way to Sibolga, through Tapanoeli. I saw Sibolga, lying on the bay with all its little islands, from a height which I climbed whilst the motor waited. We follow the downward road with its fourteen hundred turnings, if they have been counted correctly. Tahir would like to hum the whole way down, Tahir has never done this and would very much like to do it now. We feel rather as if we were going to be experimented on by Tahir, but Imân says that he has told Tahir everything about the road, and there is no danger if a chauffeur combines skill with prudence. Not even on a maiden tour. So that Tahir, in silent transports of delight, puts his hand on the wheel and, with us in the car, quavers down the fourteen hundred bends to Sibolga.

We are at the bottom of the winding road. In the town we take in petrol at a Chinese store, which, as I heard later, disappeared next day in a blazing fire!

And we hasten on. You can see the sea through the palm grove. It is like a fairy tale, this sea; we can see its placid water-line shimmering between the trunks and crowns of coconut trees. The landscape grows ever wider and more imposing. I can remember a waterfall among pine trees, followed immediately by a ravine and narrow clefts, and a land of clouds and rainy mists.

Sometimes we see buffalo lying in the mud taking their mud bath. Such heavenly coolness for their great bodies! There they lie, slumbering, only their heads with wide-stretching horns and their soft, philosophical eyes can be seen. How gentle they are for such great beasts. A little naked boy, cane in hand, looks after them. And they allow themselves to be led. It seems as though, like the Bengal oxen, they had an inward life, quite apart from their drudging and dragging. Or is this but a foolish phantasy? Does that buffalo yonder, dragging and



Padang Uplands with old adat houses.

Botanic Gardens, Buitenzorg.

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drudging, think of . . . other things; has he a secret spiritual life of his own? Is it because of the pensive philosophical look of the beast, a look which he sometimes veils behind a dullness of expression, as though he did not wish you to look him straight in the eyes? No, the buffalo is not merely a thick-skinned, heavy-footed beast; I cannot but believe that he thinks, muses, dreams, has an inward life, and because he thinks it good, he lets himself be led by the naked boy with a twig in his hand.

The Batta element is at an end. No unclean swine snuffle through the compound, the Moslem atmosphere prevails more and more. We have reached Padang Sidempoean. The rest-house is unsatisfactory, but fortunately the mandoor gives us a good lunch. If this journey is to be possible for the motorist, he must not risk coming upon such pasangrahans as that of Padang Sidempoean. A tourist does not need luxury, but cleanliness is a quite justifiable demand. Outside, under a shed of atap, both the chauffeurs are carefully examining the car. I would trust any motors in the world to these two boys.

We drove on the following day to Fort-de-Kock, and were eleven hours in the car. It was a great achievement, but thanks to the weather, the air, and the kindness of the gods, Tahir and Imân, the motor and the road, we did it in eleven hours—sometimes we got along fast and sometimes less fast—without being held up once. And during those eleven hours, none of which seemed too long, we were once again under the magic spell of the grand, majestic landscape, so that we did not grow tired of looking out and seeing all the near and distant prospects, ever changing as we passed. It was a triumphal progress through vanquished beauties of forest and hill and abyss, past compounds and rivers, past a waterfall, and a pond with sacred fish, which the chauffeurs fed, and which were as greedy as they were holy. Towards evening we reached Fort-de-Kock, or Boekit-Tinggi as the natives call it. We alighted at the Hôtel Centrum, conscious of being in the centre of a country teeming with interest.

These are the lands of the Matriarchy, the lands of the amazingly beautiful Minang-Kabau houses and curious customs, the Padang Uplands, which are dominated by Merapi and Singalang, the two volcanoes, which, according to the legend, are lover and bride. These are the lands which are the end of our monumental tour: "Across Sumatra."

It will be entrancing to spend ten days in Fort-de-Kock: each morning we shall do one of the many interesting expeditions, and during the rest of the time we shall gaze at the giant and giantess, Merapi and Singalang, watching *him* as he stands in radiant power, seeing *her* veil and unveil herself in garments of mist. The Ophir, too, where Salomo, so runs the oft-refuted legend, had his gold-mines dug, rises up in a violet or purple-hued mantle of rain and sunshine, and between the flanks of those hills our car will hasten each morning to grottos and other ponds with sacred fish, to famous ravines and to the lakes of Manindjau and Singkarang.

The lover and the bride: they dominate the horizon foot by foot. They shelve down towards each other, and it is strange how mountains which have nothing of human form about them can give birth to legends of titanic humanity and divinity. To the natives, these hills are gigantic beings. Ages ago Merapi fought with Ophir for the favour of Singalang. It was the primeval conflict of volcanoes for one who had not yet spoken in words of fire. Merapi defeated his opponent. One day Merapi and Singalang will approach one another in an embrace of lava and fire, and then the Dutch domination in this country will be at an end—such is the belief.

The mighty hill-flanks shelve towards one another in tentative love. The bride watches; the lover burning with an inward flame is still restrained. . . . But, however violent may be the passions which will break forth from these mountain-beings, a mighty upheaval has already taken place here. The Karbouwengat, that colossal ravine, is as though the rocks had been split apart into a deep, wide valley which coils itself between these walls

of stone. The marble grotto of Kamang, with petrified forms of elephants and human beings, and drops of water, ever dripping from the stone, bear witness to other dead and bygone passions. It has all passed through the most tremendous upheaval. All these lines and forms, be they peaceful and charming or petrified and unyielding, have come into being after eruptions and cataclysms.

This ravine of Harau is like a cleft Titan castle, and these gloomy spots where the waterfall dashes through the shadow are haunted by orang-aloes and orang-boenian, and at night the ghostly army of heroes and fallen appear, so that our chauffeurs will scarcely pause a moment because they are afraid, the gallant boys who are never daunted by the road though they tremble at this wide and gloomy ravine, these steep walls, these wide, white veils of water-nymphs, at all this unearthly atmosphere: so much so that they will not wait till the noted Echo shall ring three times, but speed along in the car out of the Harau Ravine, back to light, sunshine, spacious green and far-stretching luminous horizon, to reach once more a world of reality.

XIII

How can I call up for you this Minang-Kabau atmosphere? It is a " nagari," or village, where one is shown the horn of a female buffalo, which is said to have belonged to a Javanese prince at one time; this Javanese buffalo, evidently challenged all Malay buffaloes—those born in Sumatra itself—and the champion would have won the country for his ruler. It was a struggle between the Malay race of Sumatra and a threatened Javanese rule.

The Malays of Sumatra thought of a ruse—they starved a buffalo-calf, fastened an iron spike to his head, and let loose the animal, who rushed at the Javanese lady-champion, in order to quench his thirst, and in doing so pushed the spike into her stomach. She died and the Malay buffalo had saved the country for its native race, which has since been called Minang-Kabau. (The buffalo (Karbouw) has won.)

The legend lacks poetry—nevertheless I had to mention it. The little place which is called after the legend is not interesting either, but it is the cradling-place of these curious customs which are not only observed but worshipped in the exceedingly graceful four- and six-fold houses, the houses in which the Matriarchy is still in force—and this is worth noting.

In no other place has the " mother-right " been as purely preserved as it is here. Descent and inheritance are reckoned along the mother's line. Not the brothers, but the sisters and their children form the family. Certainly the panghoeloe, the head of the family, is a man, and he even possesses a permanent title or " galar," but after

his death the dignity descends to his younger brother or to the eldest nephew, the child of his eldest sister.

The oldest man of the oldest female branch is Mamak, ruler, of the family estate—harto poesaka—the indivisible property belonging to that family of women. He consults all the men of the family as well as the women about anything he wishes to do. The man comes into his wife's house ; if he talks about his house, he means his wife's family-house ; he calls his own family-house " my sister's house." When he is ill he returns to his birthplace, to his sister's house.

I do not know whether the women really rule in these Matriarchal houses, but it does not seem to be improbable.

We had seen the Lake of Manindjau lying in silent depths, like a magic pool, out of which rose the clouds, higher and yet higher, until the water looked like a smooth metal mirror under the radiant rays of the sun. All at once we heard a cock crowing, dogs barking, the mocking laughter of rogues . . . but there were no cocks and dogs and rogues ; they were monkeys—tailless ones—yowling in a mad chase among the trees. Some children offered us orchids—their roots carefully wrapped in earth and banana leaves. On our way back, I was struck by a very fine, large Minang Kabau house, built on poles, with its graceful, ship-like outline of roof—the middle part had twice been added to, so that the new roofs jutted out, to right and left, from under the side parts of the mother-roof, like the bows of a ship, always at about the same height.

The family grew too big for the house : the sisters did their duty diligently and side-pavilions were added—the second addition is even prettier than the first ; the uttermost pavilions resemble hives, large hives on poles. The three, four or five padi-barns, on the compound in front of the house, are hive-shaped also. These houses are decorated with carving, red, blue, yellow, gold and black in colour, but the padi-barns, in front of the house, are even more decorative and sometimes look like huge jewel-boxes. Often there are round bright mica-scales which

look as if they had been sown in the red and black and gold carving of these houses. They glitter in the sun and the whole house is like a wonderful jewel ; it reminds one for a moment of an antique missal, of the illumination work of monks, but such a simile is of course at variance with this Eastern art, which is possibly older than the Moslem faith of the natives.

Let us, after my digression, return to this particular house at Lawang. Female heads appeared at the many square windows, while we stopped in our car and admired—old women, young women, children. Most certainly a female dominion ! The women who came home were dressed in the very fine, rich, but sober, kaïns, which they weave here, and one of them wore her gold-interwoven silk "slendang" folded straight across the shoulder. She was a newly-married woman and had only worn her bride's kaïn for a few days. The hair of these women was wound up in a cloth, which stuck out to right and left in two horns. Once again the buffalo (karbouw) motif of the Minang-Kabauers. And now I recognised the horn-motif everywhere, the roof-points of the houses, the padi-barns, the head-cloths, even the baskets which these women make, and use for every household purpose, all jutting out to left and right, displayed the buffalo-horn motif, in memory of the Karbouw which won, and it was all very graceful and delicate in design and colour, testifying to a great and unconscious artistic feeling. For, of course, these people know nothing about "art": they have never thought about it. Everything which they have built, woven and worked for centuries was graceful and amazingly beautiful ; they have never pondered over this wondrous beauty, which is an advantage and at the same time a disadvantage.

An old Minang-Kabauer came out of the house. He approached us very politely as we sat in the car, admiring. He invited us into the house, the house of his sisters. I introduced myself and he told me that he was the Toeangkoe Laras, and that his "galar"—title—was Toeangkoe Soetan Talembang.

The old village and family chief was pensioned by the Government. He received thirty-two guilders per month. He was a fine, courteous old man. We saw the inside of the house, which really consisted of a long space, on one side of which were six or seven rooms, the little rooms of these many women—who rule here—and their children. There was a nice little boy, the future title-bearer, I think. He greeted the guests and strangers very politely with a smile and a little bow. The small rooms all remained closed and we showed no discourteous curiosity. But I remembered what I had heard : that the men who have married into the family come on fixed days to visit their wives in the family-house. If they forget this, or come a day later, they may expect a violent scene of jealousy in the little narrow room, and the sisters and aunts and grandmothers—why should there not be several ?—listen in the other little rooms at the thin partitions and hug themselves with delight.

Sometimes a man has more than one wife in different family-houses, but I believe that this is rare, and that monogamy is more according to " adat." His children are not his family—the children of his sister are his family, and for them he feels family affection. It is almost impossible to understand that in a Matriarchy the paternal instinct is almost entirely secondary.

From an economic point of view, the Matriarchy does not promote individual initiative. On the other hand it keeps intact the family-estate, the indivisable " harta poesaka," and certainly promotes national prosperity. There is no pauperism in these parts. The children are protected by the Matriarchy against the parents, the women against the men, and prostitution does not exist.

This institution, which has disappeared in China and elsewhere, has survived here. The Minang-Kabauer says of the Matriarchy that it does not crack like a lump of earth in the heat, does not rot in the rain, like wood. . . .

One might almost wish whilst considering these advantages that the whole world were a Matriarchy.

The tourist must certainly admire its graceful lines and its general air of prosperity. But what else do they do in the world, these complacent people ? I wondered about this as we left the Toeangkoe and the pretty little boy to whom I kissed my hand did the same to me most gracefully—I do not know what else they do. They have their endless perkaras and grow in them, in the midst of family conclaves. Just try and buy a piece of ground from a Minang-Kabau Soekoe (a society of families connected to one another). The family council, with priests and panghoeloes, will then unite on the said piece of ground, sit down in a wide circle and confer until the sun sinks. Will the conference be at an end then and the piece of ground be yours ? Probably not. A second meeting is called and the conclave is continued with its endless complications, *ad infinitum.*

I had no intention of buying Minang-Kabau land in the Padang Uplands, and consequently did not remain sticking in the mud of the perkaras. As a tourist I admired the houses, the padi-barns, like illuminated hives on poles, and the gold-interwoven dress of the women. When these women go to market, it is they who, in spite of their supremacy in the beautiful house, carry the burden. And how gracefully always ! Look at them, with baskets rocking on their heads and on the top of these baskets a toedoeng or hat, going up the galangans or the serwahs, climbing, climbing, without putting their hands to the burden. How graceful !—whilst the men, walking behind them, carry nothing but . . . a round bird's cage, over which hangs a dark cloth, with four golden acorns or tassels weighing down the four corners. In the cage is the man's dearly beloved fighting bird, which later he will bring into the lists with another bird. Sometimes he carries his fighting-cock in his arms, and the cock, dazed by the warmth of human hands, lies limp against his master's chest.

We were at Fort-de-Kock for eleven days, and each day the motor-tour among the hills, up the slope of Merapi, through Singalangs' bridal veil, grew more

wonderful and lovely, casting a spell on our admiring gaze. Oh, how beautiful are the rice-fields, thinly planted or more thickly, with swelling ears, like liquid steps and stairs, with gracefully-curved terraces, reflecting the immense masses of clouds, whilst white herons stand on stilt legs, or float in the air stretching their sinuous necks. From the bibit-fields—the fields which are thickly planted with sprouting seeds—the women and children pick bunches of tender cuttings and plant them, like a sacrifice in pious memory to the Padi gods, in the rich, shining, inundated earth with one deft movement of the finger. There is the lately planted field, liquid and grassy and devout ; quite near are the fields which were planted earlier and where the padi is already thick and a luscious green ; and quite near, too, are the fields which are still full of weeds and which will be ploughed on the morrow.

See, the buffalo draws the harrow along those rows of tender padi-plants, piously bedded out. It is as if the great beast feels that they give the precious rice, the consecrated food of mankind. He drags his heavy feet in and out of water and greasy earth ; the harrow's teeth just pass between the little plants and the buffalo's feet do not trample on a single tender blade. It is as if man and beast unite in worship—it is as moving as a prayer.

Notice, also, the little bamboo-houses on poles with roofs, standing in the midst of the sawah-fields, sometimes under a single palm which grows sideways then straightens its long stem in the water, stretching its crown towards the sky. Sometimes these houses are found beside a little clump of banana trees. From these little huts a number of lines are drawn across the rice-fields, and on the lines there are black fibre tassels, bits of tin, long ropes of leaves and so forth : the padi-birds—those little thieves—flutter in flocks over the ripening rice. But the children, boys and girls, little live scarecrows, keep watch in the open huts and pull the lines or make them swing up and down. And all the tassels and bits of cloth and tin plates and ropes of leaves move in rhythm over the rice-fields, and the padi birds, those charming

little thieves, flutter here and there, whilst the children drive them off with gibes and songs, frightening them away with sharp cries, the little thieves, who from early morning till late evening are lured by the ripening grains of rice.

THIRD PART

JAVA AND BALI

I

When we had left Fort-de-Kock, where we had spent eleven days and where each morning we had made an interesting tour, and had motored through the Anei-Chasm, and past the waterfall to Padang, our monumental tour " Across Sumatra " was at an end. We saw with sorrow the last of the Minang-Kabau houses, with their ship-like roofs, their coloured, decorated walls and padi-barns, disappear amidst the green of coconut, bamboo and banana-trees. All the majesty and the beauty of Sumatra lay, after these few weeks—I had been just five weeks in Sumatra—behind us. Was it a dream or was it something more ? In any case, the memory is there, and will be there always, unforgettable, deeply imprinted in my mind for the rest of my life.

In the meanwhile, I would advise the would-be tourist : If you would like to make this same tour to Sumatra, then hurry up. For we have seen the last stages of Minang-Kabau beauty, and in five years' time, I fancy, it will all have passed, all those beautiful Matriarchal houses of painted and carved wood. Why do I venture on this prophecy ? Merely because, during the last few years, the roofs of atap—fibre or leaf-thatch—have been supplanted here and there by roofs of galvanised iron. And worse : whereas we were charmed to find by one side of ponds with sacred fish—did I tell that they are sometimes bewitched children ?—the most delightful little mosques, reflected in square pools, in other places we were driven to despair by the sight of ready-made mosques—

mosques manufactured in one piece, of galvanised iron plates !

The walls, and the side-pointed roofs were iron absurdities, very solid, no doubt, and baking hot, but such barbarisms, such monstrosities, that one wondered if it could not have been prevented ? Could the Administration authorities of these districts not have exerted their influence so that the Minang Kabauer should continue to build in the Matriarchal style which he had followed for so many sacred ages ? It would appear not. " Industry " has triumphed over the primitive style. It is the triumph of galvanised iron !

Therefore, hasten, would-be tourist ! These beautiful houses are already in a dilapidated condition, are disappearing every day and, even when they are built up in the same style, they are decorated with ripolin. Once again I predict : in five years' time, all houses, all mosques in the Padang Uplands will be rebuilt with corrugated iron plates, the softly-tinted little house, the padi-shed, which is like a jewel-shrine, will be things of the past. . . .

I shall try to forget this horror, as if it had been a nightmare.

Once more I should like to express my gratitude, both on behalf of the *Haagsche Post* and myself, for the extraordinary kindness and hospitality of all the authorities, residents, officials and planters. Almost always there was something of sadness in our farewells, and yet how short were most of our visits. Friends in Sumatra, I offer you my heartfelt thanks.

Not the least melancholy was the parting from our two chauffeurs, Tahir and Imân. They toured with us the last few days in Padang, that wonderful, old-time Indian town, tucked away amongst wide green avenues, very typical with low, shady, white-pillared houses in gardens thick with foliage. We passed down by the harbour to the lighthouses, and admired the inlets along the green coast, whilst hosts of monkeys, pale-grey in colour, frisked about on the road, and delightful, sensible monkey-faces gazed at us from amongst the trees.

There is a certain monkey-hill at Padang, but we were quite satisfied with the monkeys which happened to come along our road; more monkeys might have become a bore!

Tahir and Imân wanted to go with us to Batavia. They were both from Java and got homesick when we booked our passages on the *Willis* of the Rotterdam Lloyd. "We will buy a motor in Batavia," said Imân—more spontaneous than Tahir, who was reserved in character. "And, after we have driven the "Toean Besar" and the "Njonja Besar" through Java, we will sell it, at a small loss."

So spoke Imân. We were the "great gentleman" and the "great lady." This is a courtesy title, I think, that is given one after a certain age, or at least when one's first youth is past.

However, I put it to Imân that such a transaction—to buy a motor and sell it after three months—might perhaps have been possible before the depression, but that now I thought it somewhat imprudent. And I patted our good chauffeurs, on whose skill our lives had hung for a month as from a silken thread, on the shoulders as we went on board the *Willis* and waved for the last time to our little "Essex" and these good lads.

That, too, was past. Now we were off once more, travelling onwards day after day. How lovely in the setting sun were the red-brown ospreys circling round, intent on their fishy prey, above the waters of the harbour of Padang. Sometimes their wings gleamed carmine and gold brown. Naked boys dived after coppers just as they had done in Port Said and Colombo. Two days and nights along the coast of Sumatra and the curving line of Benkoelen. Very early in the morning I caught sight of Krakatau, cleft in two—the island of fiery frenzy—and the two rocks, so rosy and calm in the morning light, looked as though there had never been any outbreak of fury.

Tandjong Priok. No beauty on arrival, but the dear faces of relatives and friends, come to meet us in spite

of the burning sun. It is strange how full of sentiment one feels when one is met, on arriving anywhere in a boat. I would truly rather never be met at a station, but to step on shore from a boat, alone and unwelcomed. . . .

There they were, the dear folk. They came with us and we were soon in Batavia in the Hôtel des Indes, in Weltevreden. Oh, old memories! Why do you haunt me now? For I was here twenty years ago, but my childhood's memories did not throng about me as they do now. Were things less changed at that time?

"You will find India very changed." Such is the general prediction. It is quite true—India, I should speak of Java now, is very much changed and more changed than I found it twenty years ago.

Must I compare the mentality of the native with the mentality of the native of bye-gone days? Must I compare the Dutchman's appearance with his appearance of former times? Shall I describe to you a cinema, chock full of natives, or shall I lay before you a session of the National Council, and give you a sketch of some present-day Regents?

I may or may not do all this. Fortunately, I am free, I, a traveller in impressions, whom you can take seriously or not, as you please, free to lay my impressions before you, according to my whim of the moment.

So, if to-day I assure you with everybody else that India, Java, Batavia—for that is as far as we have gone as yet—are all very changed, it will only mean that I am indulging in sentimental memories of the town of my boyhood. Will you allow me to recall this town to you? Or do you think I need not have travelled so far to do this? In which case, I must tell you, that it is just because of the present, which surrounds me in Batavia and Weltevreden, that I can see and feel the past more intensely than ever. . . .

It was, of course, not ideal, any more than it is to-day. But I was a child, born in Holland, though well-versed in Indian tradition.

I was ten years old when I saw Weltevreden for the

first time. Boyhood's years and school time. We did not play football, but "baar," a war game with a little flag which had to be seized by the fleetest of foot. We had no bicycles and no tennis, but we were all in love with the schoolgirls in their loose white frocks with narrow collars round the throat. Sometimes we were terribly in love. The sun made our youthful blood boil.

What has all this got to do with Batavia, now. Not much. But allow me, just allow me, to linger for a moment among the memories of former days.

These dear girls lived in beautiful houses on the Koningsplein and the neighbouring high-class districts. There were one or two in almost every house. I can see all these houses once again, and I cannot help smiling at my reminiscences.

Batavia, Weltevreden! Formerly it seemed to me —if I may trust my boyish memories—a distinguished, fine white colonial capital and residency. The houses were, it is true, of no great architectural beauty, but they were built by our ancestors—practical and light, white and empty, spacious and cool, on great estates, with lofty trees, the shadows of which formed a striking contrast to the sunshine beyond the shade. Not a single motor drove up and down those wide avenues, but there were beautiful landaus belonging to the parents of the charming girls. Lili, Toeti and Nonnie drove with father and mother round the Koningsplein, behind dignified Preanger horses, whilst the coachman, with a cockaded hat over his head-cloth, quietly held the pair in check, accompanied by two stable-boys in long coats.

On Sunday the livery was somewhat more European—each with a fly-flap in his hand, stood on a step behind the landau, and at each turn of the road they would spring down from their step, brush in hand, to guide, left and right, the stately wheels of the imposing equipage. The dear girls would wave to each other with their handkerchiefs as they passed, and you would remember that in the evening you were going to dance here or there, with Toeti and Lili and Nonnie.

On Sundays there was music on the Waterlooplein near the column of the Lion of Waterloo—a nice little dog on a pillar. The Government buildings and the officers' houses were built round the square. And the beautiful, stately equipages of the notables of the Koningsplein, Kramat, Menteng, Tonabang, Molenvliet, Rijswijk and Goenong-Sari, rolled up, and the coachmen and stable-boys wore their finest hats and coats and carried their Sunday fly-flaps. It was the finest moment in the week for you. I mean during the day time, for there were evening concerts also, to which your elder sisters went, whilst Lili, Toeti and Nonnie could not go to them until they were rosebuds of sixteen summers. They were only schoolgirls then, but whenever they grew up they got engaged whilst you yourself were but a boy.

Of what use are all these foolish memories? Shall I tell you that I no longer see these dear girls? But that, of course, is my fault alone. Shall I assure you that there is no social concert on the Waterlooplein, though the cinemas are always crowded? Shall I tell you that stately carriages no longer come rolling by, that motors tear past at full speed in dust or rain or through the mud? I, myself, am seated in a car so that I cannot complain. Am I to worry over the fact that nearly all the beautiful houses of former days are hotel-annexes or shops, falling into decay, without either mortar or paint, and disfigured with ugly inscriptions? No, I will not moan over this any longer, but . . .

But . . . over there I recognize, at the corner of the Koningsplein and a side street, our own home of bygone days! The dear, pretty, white house of long ago. There it stands paintless, plasterless, and dilapidated, and I will not look at what it has become now after, not twenty, but nearly fifty years! I only feel a lump in my throat. And then I smile again, because Batavia is well . . . a modern, prosperous town with many cars, many notices, many new houses, without a single "estate," almost without a garden. . . .

Soendanese Batikker.

p. 138.

And, of course, plenty of nice young Toeties and Nonnies who probably know where all the youthful footballers and schoolboys live, and will find them at the Sunday soirées dansantes in the Hôtel des Indes.

II

Come, let us be tolerant. The outward appearance of all cities changes during the course of years. Rome and Florence have modified their ancient grandeur in a democratic manner, The Hague sacrificed the Lange Voorhout and Vyverberg to the spirit of the age, and on the Koningsplein at Batavia, formerly a stylish, square lawn, where on the south side in clear weather Salak and Gedeh showed blue against the sky, arose a hotel, a race-course and pleasure-grounds, spoiling what was once stately and aristocratic in line. . . . Let us be tolerant, just as Salak and Gedeh who are still blue in clear weather, are tolerant. And so I must not insist too much on the fact that I consider Batavia . . . the decayed capital of the Dutch Indies.

Perhaps I am wrong, and Lord Northcliffe, who apparently noticed the reverse, may be right. On the other hand, he had no childhood's memories thronging about him.

Lying in my long chair in the verandah of our rooms at the Hôtel des Indes I cannot manage to drive them away. . . .

Forty years ago . . . I was staying in the Hôtel des Indes. Henri Borel [1] was right when he said that an injustice had been done to one of the two old banyan trees when part of its trunk and roots was taken away because a covered dancing-hall had to be built. But, if like the wise banyan itself, one has forgiven this injustice, then I

[1] A famous Dutch writer.

must own that this old and famous hotel gives a pleasant and modern impression. Especially if one stays on the first floor of the new left wing. On the floor above, one is in great danger from earthquakes, but safer from mosquitoes. These apartments are very spacious and comfortable. Plenty of room is a necessity in this hot town, and the builders of the modern houses at Gondangdia, the new district, did not take this fact into account. It is all the more credit to this hotel that one can breathe freely and move about in the room or can gaze dreamily into the crowns of tamarind, pine and banyan, whilst below, in the distance, the band fiddles for the dance.

Another thing which is praiseworthy in this hotel is its rice-table, which is served as an alternative to the European lunch. I am glad of this opportunity to talk about the Indian rice-table.

There is in India the tendency to Europeanise the entire life. This tendency has come from Singapore, via Medan—the cool planters' town—and has spread during the last few years over Sumatra and Java. It includes the almost total abolition of rice-table. Where rice-table used to be the almost standard lunch, during the last ten or fifteen years—who started it ?—it has become fashionable to look down upon rice-table as unhygienic and "Indian." "Boeuf braisé" (sic) sausages with curly kale and cabinet pudding. "Do not talk to me about rice-table ! " someone said to me. "We have abolished it—the only way not to become ' Indian ' ! "

I was rather amused at this fear. In order not to become "Indian," not slow, not lethargic, not lazy, the European does away with his spicy rice-table and demands a lunch which he would never eat in his own country, so heavy and rich that he would enjoy it if he had been skating for several hours. Now he eats two heavy dinners in the day. India was never famous for its meat. One likes to eat something roasted once a day at dinner, but for the rice-table the not over-tender meat was camouflaged by its tasty manner of cooking. I consider this abolition of rice-table in the hotels and most private

houses a mistake and against the climate, that greatest enemy of the European in India.

If a European wishes to remain healthy he needs the rice-table. And I am willing to bet that whoever says that it is a bad thing does not know how to eat it. For there are many Dutchmen who have been in India for years and who do not know how to eat rice-table. They pile upon their plates rice, vegetables, meat and sambals, one on top of the other, and mix it into a sort of olla prodida. The taste is good, just as the taste of nassi-goreng (baked rice) is good. But, mixed up like this, it is an indigestible and unæsthetic mess, most unattractive in appearance. Whoever eats rice in this manner will not keep healthy and will take a dislike to rice-table. At the same time he runs the risk that his clever cook, if he has one, will think, " Why should I take the trouble to prepare my boemboe (spices) if my toean mixes up all these fragrant delicacies on his plate ? "

To eat rice-table is an art. Do not take too much rice at once (you can add more if you like). Make your selection from the many courses—how charming it is in the Hôtel des Indes to see the procession of native servants walking round with all these dishes ! Keep your rice white and virginal as long as you can. Take your sajoer or vegetable sauce in a cup. On another plate arrange the various courses as if it were a palette. Take only a very small quantity of all the different, often very hot, sambals—beware of the sambal-oelek, pure red pepper !—and keep them well separated on the edge of your plate. With each mouthful of rice—you eat your rice with a spoon and fork—you will select some meat, chicken, or fish and with it one of the sambals. Each mouthful of rice is a new mixture. You vary these combinations so that, if you eat in the right way, each mouthful of rice will have a different flavour. What a choice there is ; you will never get tired of it. And above all you must eat with moderation and on no account like a savage, who in a restaurant might mix sôle à la Meunière, tournedos and Pêche Melba on his plate and

think he was doing very well in taking his meal in this fashion.

It is perhaps to be deprecated that rice-table is eaten from a plate, in fact a soup-plate. You must remember that the native, who eats with his fingers, finds it easier to choose the correct combinations than we do, inside the narrow confines of our deep plates. But having accepted this Western " plate " (instead of a banana leaf) you must not fill it in a haphazard manner, but you must do homage to flavour, quantity and selection at this meal, which, I repeat, eaten in moderation, is better for European blood than pea-soup, sausages and curly Kale can be. A curious contrast ! Nevertheless, the European enjoys his heavy winter meal ; can it be a homesick longing for his own country ?

We are going to stay for a week in Weltevreden and we can now smile at the sweet, sad memories of childhood. We are resting after our busy life in Sumatra and after the grand tour right across Sumatra, and our daily routine is no different from that of anyone else.

Who is " everyone " in India ? " Everyone " is a merchant, official or planter. We observed that the planter at Deli and his daily routine is rather unusual ; the daily routine of an official and a merchant is more or less the same, although it varies in detail.

But all start the day at an early hour. Everyone is up by six o'clock. It is the hour for the traditional cup of coffee. When you have opened your door—either in your hotel or your own house—the " jongos " (an ugly, bastard word derived from jongen—servant), appear instantaneously with a cup of coffee. You are pining for it. It is usually very strong coffee—extract, with boiling milk, at least the milk is supposed to be boiling, but when do they ever understand the word " boiling " in hotels, either for water or milk ? Nevertheless, you enjoy your coffee.

It is during this early morning hour that you get ready for the day. You take your bath, but perhaps you do not know how this is done. Only very seldom does one

find a bath tub or a hot bath in India, although it would appear to be a necessity in this land of perspiration. The bath in India, is the siram bath. " Siram " is to sprinkle oneself. A more or less elegant square reservoir is filled up to the brim with water, nowadays out of a tap, but formerly in the primitive manner, from a well nearby.

Don't forget yourself when stripped, and don't imagine that you can plunge into this reservoir as into a little swimming pond ! You would be committing the greatest blunder, and you would have polluted the water for whoever was to come after you.

On the edge of the reservoir you will find a " gajong," a hand-bucket with a wooden handle fastened crossways at the top. With this bucket, which you fill again and again from the reservoir, you sprinkle yourself, after having soaped. You enjoy the more or less cool water, and your bath is at an end. I cannot say that I rave about this " siram " bath, as I do about the rice-table. I pay tribute to the latter, but the former always makes me miss my tub and plentiful supply of hot water. It seems to me very curious that in the Europeanisation of Indian life a hot bath and a tub are very rarely found, and I have heard English and American people say that the primitive " siram " bath—there is sometimes a cold spray with it—keeps them from travelling in India.

Breakfast is at about eight o'clock, and it is generally very elaborate. Between porridge and cold meat, every variety of dish, cheese, ham, etcetera, is placed upon the table. Is a light French breakfast not more hygienic ? An Indian breakfast is almost an English breakfast.

To work, to work ! To the old city, to the offices ; merchants and officials work—they work hard, they work very hard. The telephone is always going ; papers accumulate. The planter works hard, too, but he uses his muscles as well ; merchants and officials work with their brains. In a land which the gods created to be only devout and small in comparison with mighty nature, the European works to the utmost of his strength. Money, career. Money for the merchant, career for the official.

A fortune for one, promotion for the other, who knows that he cannot count on much money.

Presumably those hard workers abolished the rice-tables ; they ate too much and drank too much beer with it, almost falling asleep afterwards. Now they lunch hurriedly and work again. I believe more merchants than officials go home to lunch. But nearly everyone comes home in the evenings—they are tired and want to rest. The twilight—oh, certainly there is a twilight in India, and for me this melancholy twilight lasts quite long enough—is the hour of rest. A second bath is taken. The weary European braces himself up and the clothes which he puts on are somewhat more European, although white ; there is the Club, there are calls, nowadays even afternoon tea, and there are cinemas ! There is dinner and bridge. The European tries to forget all about India. If he is sensible, he will not make the evening too long. He must be up at six next morning.

But have you ever heard about the siesta after the rice-table ? Well, I forgot to tell you that the siesta as well as rice-table has been abolished, at least, officially. Whoever happens to fall asleep for a moment, after lunch, does not like to admit it. During the former hours of siesta one works, and I myself work at that hour, too.

III

It is the wet season. The rain comes down from the heavens with epic force. White sheets of rain fall perpendicularly between drenched houses and saturated trees. Batavia lies buried in rain and mud. There is no sun, and no light. It seems strange to find this indefinite, grey twilight in a land dedicated, one would think, to the sun. Sometimes it rains all day and sometimes for hours. But no light breaks through and at four o'clock it is dark. In the rooms and central verandahs lights are lit early, if not all day, and in the front and back verandah everything feels damp. Sometimes a violent wind gets up and blows through verandahs and rooms; often there are no panes of glass.

You may or may not be susceptible to atmospheric conditions, but you will, at any rate, find this very cheerless. Cheerless and close as well, although there is sometimes a sudden, cool breeze. People who have been long in India love this wind. It revives them. They sit in it, thinly clad; they drink tea in it; they sup in it; they play bridge in it, whilst the cards almost blow away. Those who have just come from Europe will do well to beware of this predominance of indoor wind. The wind forms part of the climate which is so antagonistic to the European. The climate that is always lying in wait for him. He has to acclimatise himself; he must get used to heat, to a sultry atmosphere, to violent perspirations, to feeling the moist wind on his own moist body; he gets fever and slight intestinal affections. . . .

We hear now and again of our fellow-passengers on

Crater Papandajan.

Sorting Tea.

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board ship. One has fever, another typhus ; one of them has ear trouble, one is just getting up and another has just succumbed. So-and-so is not very well and so-and-so is really bad. . . . The enemy has got them all in his clutches and, when they have conquered the enemy, they should take care. It is not sufficient to be inoculated against typhus, cholera, small pox, and to hope that the plague cannot get a hold on a European constitution subject to all the rules of hygiene. It is not sufficient to avoid drinking any ordinary water, to eat neither fish nor salad. You should examine yourself every day and not put off calling in the doctor for a physical disorder of which you would think nothing in Europe.

The atmosphere which surrounded me during the week that I spent in Batavia was woven of slight depression, rain, wind, no sun, no daylight even, and a general search after new sensations. And you work, you try to work hard like everybody else here. You open your boxes, you turn them over and see what your European clothes look like ; your furs and your silk hat. For you are going to Japan and China !

The trunks are opened. It is no surprise to us ; we well know how dejected everything looks when boxes are opened after having been shut up for a few weeks in the rainy atmosphere of the tropics. The careful fingers of " djaït "—djaït means seamstress, and, in this special case, my wife's maid—help to unpack and to smooth. Everything feels damp and is creased. You would like to send your cloth and serge and flannel suits to the tailor to get them pressed. Your wife's dainty dresses look like so many limp and melancholy rags. It does not matter, and you admire her heroism as she is not in despair ; djaït will iron it all out. But even ironed garments are crushed again when you have worn them for an hour during this weather.

We Europeans are imbeciles out here. We ought to dress quite differently. Our industries ought to manufacture special tropical stuffs, both for dresses and underclothes, and we ought to scrap all our cloth suits, and our

womenfolk ought to don other frocks than the ones they wear in London, Paris, and the Hague. White, washing materials and shantung are always best, but this is not considered full dress, and you yourself have to put on a dinner-jacket, or tail-coat, unless you venture on a mess-jacket on top of black trousers.

There comes a cockroach out of your open box. " Quick, djaït ! Kill it ! " But even if the cockroach is ruthlessly annihilated it has already wrought havoc in your boxes. It has punctured a little hole and left behind a trail of small black spots. Shake everything out to see if any cockroaches are lurking in amongst your things. You did not shake out this one cockroach. One cockroach, just one, is sufficient to work havoc, and pessimistically you are sure that you will never find it among your coats and suits and furs for China and Japan. You will be sure to take *one* cockroach with you to Hongkong, Shanghai, and Yokohama, and you will not discover the damage done until you once more dress yourself up in European fashion.

Now that it has stopped raining for a few hours, we shall do this evening what everyone does who spends a week in Batavia. We shall go and see the old town—remembering Jan Pieterszoon Coen, the fort of Batavia, the energy of our mercantile forefathers, and all the " Western effort " made by our sturdy ancestors and men of the Company. Just a single hour spent in thinking of the past, and all the grandeur and might of former centuries, actually comfort you in paintless, tumble-down Batavia, for that cockroach which you will never shake from your coat or your wife's furs.

The moon shines through damp clouds and mist, haze and fog. Clouds in the sky, mist over the town, and a haze on the river. A nephew who is devoting himself to uncle and auntie—I now have nephews everywhere, and whenever they can they really devote themselves to me—takes us in his car to show us the old town in moonlight and pearly mist. A sunny morning is the usual time for reminiscing, but when there are no sunny

mornings you do so by moonlight and in pearly mists.

Down by the river, past distinguished Chinese houses —you are struck by a Pleasure Park, an inferior cinema, or something of that sort. Good heavens, what has the present age come to in its popular amusements! We motor through the Chinese Camp. The evening tones down the badly-kept road and all that is ugly, and gives everything a picturesque look. The little kitchens with their oil lights, interiors scarcely lit up, little bridges over canals, like old Amsterdam, looming faintly in the pale glimmer of a hazy moonlight—moonlight in India is to me always like a magic mirror—and the houses where our forefathers traded and even lived in the early period of their efforts. Honour to Coen. Sixteenth century, seventeenth, the castle, the drawbridge, the town hall, the Gateway with the strange vessels and the bare-footed watchmen. . . . I cannot distinguish it all in this vague magic light, it never used to be so vague and undefined, but it makes my memories stand out even clearer. Through the fish market, and to the Cannon, the sacred, noted Cannon, to which sterile women bring offerings so that they shall bear male children.

I cannot see it; it is too dark. It must lie over there, somewhere in the grass. It used not to lie over there. . . . "It has moved," says the chauffeur very seriously. We do not laugh. A European never laughs when an Oriental makes a remark of this sort. How do we know that a holy Cannon cannot move itself from one place to another? I can see it gleaming now, the canon, this age-old symbol for sterile Javanese women; the pale magic moon glides over it.

And we glide along . . . right across Batavia in the moonlight. Historic memories and memories of youth, ever and again. Here Kramat . . . there, in the Willem III Gymnasium, I was a naughty boy who would not do his lessons.

How full of ghosts is the pearly moonlight. From the head of Pieter Eberfeld, the traitor, who was impaled on

the gateway, over Goenong to Sari, Kramat and the Gymnasium, float the ghosts of memory. I recall the names of schoolmasters, of friends, of many who were young as I was, or very little older. It is all gone, the historic past as well as one's own past; all is gone—and what is left?

Hazy moonlight and a motor hastening onwards. Why do we live? What are we striving for? What does God want of us?

The storm is about to break, for the moon is clouding over. We hurry homewards to the hotel. Yonder on the ballroom floor, against the desecrated but ever-wise banyan tree, the foolish couples dance with distorted grace. Torrents of rain, black but translucent with electric light and hazy phantoms, pour down. I peer out of my distant room. Is anything aught, or is everything . . . nothing?

If there is a gleam of sunshine in the morning, then *our* djaït and all other djaïts hang everything that has been worn the previous day over lines and strings, and clothes sticks, for drying is an urgent necessity here. In the back verandah—our apartments in the Hôtel des Indes have their own front and back balconies—djaït fills her iron with charcoal, makes it blaze and keeps the fire alive with a square bamboo fan. Then she irons; she irons for hours. How is it possible for her to iron with that primitive charcoal iron without burning a hole in what she irons?

Now that the sun is shining she is going to do some washing, too, and when my wife complains of pains here and there, she massages her with lithe fingers. She speaks but little, but she is devoted, although she has only been with us for a week. She packs and unpacks the trunks; she is up to everything. Is your lady's maid so quickly trained, Madame?

The Malay—I dare not enlarge on this and include the Sundanese and the Javanese!—the Malay of simple rank and station, likes service. He resembles the Italian of the same rank and position. The new views

on life have no hold on him however much his leaders may try to initiate him, and whatever progressive natives of good birth and European education may think themselves. The Malay I am thinking of is a born servant. I have known many of them as I have known many Italians. My gallant chauffeurs in Sumatra were like this. Djaït is also one of these, I think, although her mind is as yet a sealed book to us.

The Malay is a willing servant and is true at heart. He is to be won by a single friendly word, by a smile. He may be lost by a rebuke. He can love his master or hate him in three days' time. His affection can increase daily, but his hate is inextinguishable. In us he always sees a foreign being, an interloper, a conqueror, but for ages he has resigned himself to our superiority. In his heart he recognises that we can do great things, and our aircraft he holds in holy awe. He is well acquainted with motors. But all these new phenomena do not alter the fact that the Malay is a born servant.

He likes to give his master a courtesy title. He always hands you a thing with a gesture of obeisance, elbow in hand, although his " leader " is trying to do away with this custom. It is in his blood and implanted in his soul. He serves you willingly and likes you to take all responsibility. He quickly becomes accustomed to your ways, but see that you don't alter them. If you have ever said that you like your coffee at six o'clock, then stick to it as long as you take coffee, and don't wish for your coffee next day at half-past six. This makes him " biengoen " (dazed). Nevertheless, he is not always sure of the time—he lost this certainty when he started to wear a watch—but this little discrepancy does not alter the fact, that, if he thinks that it is six o'clock, he will bring you your coffee without delay.

I was once assured that the Indian lady is very snappish to her servants; I have not found it so, neither have I any remembrance of it. I know quite well that the German officials with whom the hotels at the present time are literally teaming are very curt with the Malay

servants. Perhaps in memory of the time when they were non-commissioned officers in Germany. I should like to make them understand that a Malay who is snarled at will hate, and that his hatred can cause anger and a thrust in the back before the snarler is aware of it. It is also all wrong of these Germans to seize the Malay by the arm as he snarls. Catching hold of a person means much greater intimacy with Oriental races than it does with Westerners, and likewise betokens greater chastisement. An angry grip on the elbow is an insult to the Oriental. But when I clapped my two chauffeurs in Sumatra, on taking leave of them, on the shoulders —it would have been quite wrong to shake hands—they left their shoulders beneath my hand with the grace of good servants—which impressed and touched me.

IV

We dined at the Palace of his Excellency the Governor-General, Fock, with the Resident of Batavia, the General Secretary, and the Mayor—a small, almost intimate dinner. The " court " of our Governor is, of course, very simple. The guests group themselves in two rows, men and women, when his Excellency appears. At table the voices are slightly hushed; afterwards, however, in the white front verandah, the guests may seat themselves, even though the host is still standing talking to his other guests, although everyone knows and even openly says that it is a breach of etiquette. The following morning I visited the Museum, in front of which stands an elephant, a present from a king of Siam. This elephant, gilded in its youth, is now grey. So many things which were gold, or even only gilt in one's youth, grow grey in after years. . . .

If you were able to read and decipher all these inscribed stones and pillars a great deal of Javanese and Malay history would unveil itself in front of your eyes. Perhaps you will believe me when I say that all this lapidary literature remains a secret to me. I do not like it because it makes me feel stupid, although, after all, one may be forgiven for not being able to read everything which has been engraved in stone throughout the ages. Meanwhile, the fine, impressive Hindu images comfort me and prepare me for what I hope to admire on the Boeroeboedoer. Nevertheless, this Buddhistic beauty always seems to me a relative one, while the Greek offers me absolute beauty. A statue of Praxiteles or of Lyssipus

in its sublime simplicity gives me the form of the absolute, of the beauty which remains the same throughout all ages and in all atmospheres. This Buddhistic sculpture is a relative beauty only to be appreciated if one calls up an atmosphere about these shapes and lines. The Ganeça—god of Wisdom—made of "andesite," four-armed, straddling with legs wide apart, an elephant's head, the trunk in one hand, certainly makes an impression because of its wonderfully perfect modelling. It looks so rounded that one wonders how the hard stone ever conformed to a sculptor's devoutly persistent chisel.

But this materialisation of Wisdom can only be appreciated by recalling the atmosphere of the Ganges or some other pre-Indian period of nature, and then transferring the identical atmosphere, the identical moment, to Old Java, where this figure was found? Is it necessary to consider time and place when we see a Hermes, a Satyr, or an Aphrodite?

I found the representation of the churning of the ocean very interesting; a snake wound about the mountain upon which is Vishnu's tortoise serves the gods and goddesses as a churning-rope, with which they churn the ocean, so that the Amurta, the drink which gives them immortality, may float to the top.

Will the beautiful, famous gamelan of the Sultan of Banjermassin never be played again? . . .

We left Batavia and took with us the melancholy which is inevitable for those who attach too much value to the things of the past—things which an idealising imagination has coloured too prettily and with too much sentiment.

In Buitenzorg I mused about the Salak. Even after years of idealising, it was a wonderful sight, an unforgettable dream. . . .

In your hotel verandah you lie on a long chair, and, across the deep flowing river, the plains, the rice-fields and the coconut-palm woods, you see the Salak. Sometimes it is hidden behind heavy clouds, sometimes it's

Sawahs.

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sober glowing lines along which perhaps the lava coursed, drawn from the top or crater into valleys below, are visible. The slopes are long, like the folds of a royal mantle. How close to you is the mountain when the clouds lift. How the mountain recedes into the distance when the mists rise from the valley. The reality of rice-fields and coconut trees is constantly being changed into a paradise of dreams. At one moment everything seems close and tangible, as if it could be reached on foot in no time. The green-blue slope and the little trees are sharply outlined against a golden rosy haze, as the sun sets. Then all at once it grows unreal and only exists in a far-away vision of unattainable exaltation. It is always the same mountain—this Salak towards which my eyes and mind stray in dreams.

It is strange how these mountains, both in Sumatra and in Java rouse this serious mood of religious awe. I have been in Norway and in Switzerland, but never did I think of the things which come to me naturally here, that mountains are gods turned to stone. You will tell me that I am not an Alpinist and that he who is will feel the same divine atmosphere when, alone at night, surrounded by the pure white walls of the Alpine world, he gazes into infinity. I agree with you. But here the mountains seem supernatural when you look at them from below, from the town, from among the people who are about you.

They do not press on your chest as they do in Switzerland. They do not take away your breath as they do there. The Salak appears, vanishes, fades away, becomes a reality again. Why do I always think that this mountain is something different from what it is, presumably, to the geologist, the naturalist, and the man of science? The Salak, which I see from my verandah, is not a mountain to me; the Salak is to me a hero, a god, a goddess sometimes, who transformed those heroic or godlike shapes into undulating lines and wide marble folds from which no head rises, no arm bends. Formless, yet rich in line, that strange goddess, god or hero, who became a mountain. Is it only because of the legend?

Under the Salak, coming from the distant rice-fields and coconut-palm woods, the swollen river hurries past in a curve. Greenish-brown is the fast-flowing water, and there is a good deal of traffic near the banks. There are no boats—perhaps the current is too strong, but the fishermen who cast their nets here and there, squat on stones in expectation of their prey. Their entire families live in the river. The natives adore this fast-flowing water so much that they cannot keep away from it. The river is shallow and, although it is high tide now, they know exactly where they can wade across the wide hidden stones and boulders. Both men and women bathe and wash themselves here.

The boys swim ; the children splash and shout ; they undress, hanging their sarong and jacket on a tree, and it is touching to see how decently both men and women do it. To see a woman with her sarong knotted across her bosom emerge from her river bath and change her wet sarong for a dry one—is a sight full of chastity and charm. The boys and children are quite naked. They play foot-ball in the mud, although as far as I know mud and foot-ball cannot well be combined. They jump into the river, dive, wash themselves and come up out of the mud with their ball.

All utensils are brought to the river, and over there an older, " first wife," is training the " bini-moeda," the young or second wife, whom she herself has probably advised her husband to take, to wash the dishes and plates. She was tired of being the only wife of her husband, who was earning quite enough to take a second young wife. Her jealousy is dead. She herself has sought a " bini-moeda," for her husband She found the girl, a child of fourteen or fifteen, if age is not too vague a thing to remember. The husband was quite pleased with his charming little second wife, and the first wife had a maid at last. Never again will she wash dishes and plates in the river ; never again wash her own sarongs. There she stands after her bath, in clean sarong and cabaya, with the straight pleats which the " bini-moeda " ironed

the day before. Never again will she hold in her hand the charcoal-filled iron.

She has found her husband a second wife, a " bini-moeda " : at last the time has come when she can enjoy a well-earned rest. She trains the " bini-moeda," and she will see to it that her husband does not spoil the child too much and will not lavish too many gifts upon her. A pretty sarong and perhaps a couple of cabaya-pins made of two coins and a little chain is all he is allowed to give. And proudly the first wife stands on the river-bank whilst at her feet the " bini-moeda " washes *all* the plates and *all* the dishes, carrying them into the little house at a sharp word of command.

Further on, at the bend, squat the patient, smiling fishermen, very garrulous, telling each other stories about first wives and " bini-moedas," about jealousy and no-jealousy, and about the expensive times—such-and-such a man must earn a great deal to be able to take a second wife in these days. " Apa bole borat ? " What can he do ? His first wife wished it.

At half-past six in the morning, I find myself in the world-famous Botanic Gardens which surround the Palace of the Governor-General ; there is a glimmer of green light ; the sun is not up yet ; the beginning of dawn is breaking through the crests of the trees in the canary avenue. A warm moisture following the pelting rains of the day before pervades the air. In the ponds, the jets of water from the fountains fall down among the water-lilies, and the Royal Victoria raises its pink and white petals from among large, round, scalloped leaves which lie flat and still like Japanese lacquer on the water. Over there, some small deer wander round.

Quiet, peace, rest in this early morning hour. Here and there the Kebons (gardeners) are working. I wander about the ficus terraces, which are raised roads, and the ficus trees, heaving their broad heavy trunks from the ground over which the roots are coiled like giant snakes, grow gradually more slender, their foliage like arbours of green lacquer. Bright-coloured birds, huge butterflies,

so large and so vivid as only to be imagined in a fairy-tale. Large lizards—kadals—slip away; colonies of ants, with the activity of miniature cities, swarm and wriggle beneath your feet. Lianas, thick as tree-trunks, twist and wind. Such immense tree-ferns remind me of a tertiary period, and a man looks small walking beneath these tall green swaying fans. Light and shadow play in stripes over the grass and earth and lie there like ethereal tiger skins. Tigers are like shadow and sun; shadow and sun like tigers; there are hundreds of different palms, whose Latin equivalents do not interest me.

A green light pierces through a topaz glow, over there on the water through golden-yellow diamonds. I sit down on a seat and gaze through the masses of immensely-thick bamboo-stems, which arch themselves skywards.

I do not know how long I sat and dreamed there. I had made an appointment with the Curator, who was going to act as my guide to these wonders. I forgot all about the time. . . . I thought it was half-past six, but the moment was standing still. With a start I returned to time, reality, and the consciousness of having made an appointment. I hurried towards the Curator's house and lost myself among bamboo-palms, agaves, lianas and ficus. . . . When I reached the house it was past eight o'clock and the Curator had gone out after waiting in vain for his guest. . . .

So that day I had to apologise most humbly, as only a dreamer who is convinced of his guilt can do, a guilt for which there is no excuse but that he was dreaming, and, dreaming, lost himself in the wonders of a tertiary period.

V

When you have crossed the land of the Battas, the Padang Uplands, the Minang Kabau country, have left Sumatra, reached Java and, behind Gedeh, Salak and Pangerango, have penetrated into the Preanger Principalities, then an entirely different world unfolds itself before your eyes. It is as if hills and clouds are different, as if towns and fields are different, as if the people are different here. There are volcanoes, rain-skies, primeval forests, and coloured natives here, yet everything is different. You are struck not only by the difference in race—it is a Sundanese race here, but as if hills and trees, in fact everything which is created and wrought by nature and man, reveals to you this same difference, a racial difference one might almost call it.

The mountains are like a row of giants about you. To mention their names would be like an enumeration of heroes and Titans. Here in the North, there are the Boerangrang and the Tangoeban Prahoe. Over there in the South, Goentoer and Malabar, Tjikorai and Papandajan. These are only some of the more famous names. Among these royal potentates, there is a host of princes, hundreds of them. Legend hangs about these crowns and these mountain flanks. The mystery of fire is concealed within their laps and the epic of their primeval eruptions is carried on the breath of the soughing nightwinds, through their forests. But the days, with the soft, subdued light of the wet monsoon, conjure up a charm which is different to the majesty of Sumatra. In spite of the Titanic

immensity of the hills, fields and trees, their reflections in the river, have a charm which is almost idyllic. It is as if the legend is accompanied by the sweet tones of a flute.

The people who live here have soft, almost feminine faces, even though their build is muscular sometimes. They have dreamy eyes, round chins, and swaying hips. Their waists are slender, their voices seem scarcely to articulate. The voices murmur. Such are the Sundanese, and they seem to live in a continuous dream.

It calls up an atmosphere of mystery—this mystery hovers over the hills which surround you, over the distant horizons and the wet rice-fields. There is both mystery and charm within this majestic wreath of mountain-giants. This is the land of Java, the island of hidden forces, which either slumber or reveal themselves—to the Westerner at any rate—wrapped in an almost opaque cloak of Oriental enigma.

In the midst of this mysterious wide world of mountains, which will probably remain an eternal secret to whoever comes from the West, lies a new town, Bandoeng. A town which tells of Western effort, of Dutch East Indian culture and interests, of Dutch East Indian colonial work and struggles. It looks as if it had been built yesterday. Large, white buildings have been erected in an up-to-date style, praiseworthy because of their modern, powerful lines. You will be impressed by the Department of War, the Java Bank and the Club. The villas in the new suburbs are still rather treeless and naked-looking. It has a look of Scheveningen, and you may imagine those lower hills over there to be the downs. This criticism, however, is hardly fair. Bandoeng is a rising town of the future. In five years Nature will have filled in all the gaps between the new buildings with trees and flowers and foliage. I can see a picture of the town as it will be then, cool and finished and modern. European and Western, surrounded by mysterious hills in the mystery-drenched inscrutability of ever-waiting hidden forces.

The people are like ants. They work on and on.

Ants work at my feet—to them, if they should have the vaguest thought of me, I must be a hidden force, something which is awe-inspiring, threatening and inscrutable. In one second my foot could crush their struggles. But my foot does not crush them ; I withdraw it with a smile —I spare them . . . while later on, perhaps, in unconscious arrogance, I may crush.

I do not know why it is, but I often feel as if we were ants. And here among the hills in new, fresh, modern Bandoeng I feel again as if we were ants, oh, industrious ants, busy ants, numbers of wriggling ants. . . .

And it seems to me as if the mountains about me had smiles on their dreamy Titan faces. But that was a foolish dream.

I hope that Bandoeng may rival Weltevreden, that the new capital of Java may be Bandoeng, that other departments may follow the Department of War which has been moved here on strategic grounds. But the climate, the Westerner's greatest enemy, is too much for the working Westerner—it gnaws at his nerves and undermines the strength of his body and mind. Bandoeng's climate with its cool mountain breeze will certainly have a beneficial effect on those who establish themselves there and try to make it into a centre of work. For let us go on working like the ants ; such is our nature, our subconscious nature ; let us continue to do our little works for ourselves and for others, like the ants, in the midst of the Titanic powers and hidden forces which surround us. And if the earth should split, if the mountain giants should move and spit fire, well then—Allah's will be done ! —we shall not have acted differently from what we could and ought to have done. . . .

Or will the mountain giants never spit fire again ? Are these kings and princes really nothing but dead volcanoes— than hidden forces now for ever silent beneath the earth ?

This time I did not go up Tangkoeban Prahoe, which lies North of Bandoeng, its blue outline like a capsized proa against the blue sky. More than twenty years ago

I climbed up this mountain of legend. My memory is clear and beautiful as if I had done it yesterday. If to-day I should try to repeat this former impression I should most certainly be preparing for myself a disillusion. I have never forgotten that wonderful ride through forests of tree-ferns, climbings upwards, always upwards. Large delicate leaves arched themselves over us, like stately sunshades. It was like a palanquin, mounting upwards, also. My wife's tandoe was carried by eight Sundanese. Their step is short, there is rhythm in their springy movements, in the musical tread of their feet, under which the road is like an instrument, a sounding-board, whose music does not reach us. And the quiet notes rise higher and higher up the road.

On the top, at the double crater wall, I remember looking down into the Kawah-Oepa and the Kawah-Ratoe (poisonous crater and Empress crater). A barefooted little boy guided me down and up again. And I remember quite well what a strange, humiliating feeling I had when I realised that this smart child was guiding my footsteps downwards. As I walked it was as if I were going to fall, so steep were the rocks. When I looked up after a few minutes, I became conscious of the fact that I could come down this depth but not climb up again. And the child, a little lower than I, smiled at me, sinking ever deeper, and I could but follow his smile; and so I reached the deep sulphur lake, which is sometimes a dim white, sometimes a shiny green, like a great round precious stone, a cross between an emerald and an opal. And an awful, secret world was about me, which, in my magnificence, I defied. From a chasm rose an immense seething column of white steam. Holy spirits were hovering even in the middle of the day about me and over the sulphurous lake.

My little guide laughed all the time, like a demon who had led me here . . . all the same he pacified me . . . "I will take you back, up a different road, Sir!" . . .

And the Legend came with us on the way back and sang me this story, to the accompaniment of a flute,

so that I might know why the Tangkoeban Prahoe was a capsized proa.

The Queen of this district, Njai Dajang Soembi, and the Prince, Sangkoeriang, had been given various heroic qualities by Indra and Brahma. But on one occasion mother and son quarrelled, and the Queen hit the Prince on the head with a weapon and dealt him a wound.

In great anger and very sadly he left with his adherents his mother's kraton. He roamed about Java and conquered the whole Eastern island, then homesickness drove him back to the West, and he found, sitting on a rock, a very beautiful woman. She was his mother, who had fallen from the King's grace and was sitting here in sadness. And they loved each other. As in many old legends, in many countries, the returning Prince loves his unknown mother, whilst she does not recognise him either.

Dajang Soembi, as she strokes Sangkoeriang's head, discovers the scar, but for shame does not dare to make herself known. She dreams a ruse, so that the tragic marriage may not take place ; she sets the bridegroom a task which she imagines he cannot possibly fulfil. He must in one night build a dam across the river Tjitaroem, which is dashing up against the boulders under high tree-ferns yonder, so that this upland plain of Bandoeng may be submerged within a few hours. He must also build a large vessel so that they may sail about in her, when married.

Sangkoeriang calls together his serving spirits. Where the Tjitaroem is narrowest, the spirits help his warriors to build the dam, but the water dashes so violently against the chasm that woods must be felled and hills moved, in order to support the dam. His warriors, assisted by the serving spirits, succeed in building the gigantic proa as well, then across the flooded plain Sangkoeriang in his vessel sailed to meet his bride.

That night, by the light of the full moon, from which the gods look down, the bride's women prepared the wedding feast. She herself, at her wits' end, looks down

on everything from a mountain-top, and now she sees her son-lover approaching in his large vessel. She calls Brahma to her aid, who sends her a magician. He gives her a herb which she scatters over the dam, and the magic herb destroys the dam. The water flows back to its bed with immense force. The proa leans to one side, tilts and capsizes. The bridegroom, with all his retinue, drown, and the bride, stricken with grief, descends weeping and wailing from the mountain-top, on to the capsized vessel, throws herself into the dashing stream and embraces her son-lover in death.

The rice-boiler, the bride's tears of love, and the incense-cask were all changed by magic into hill and stream and boulder. . . .

There against the transparent sky, the capsized proa is sharply outlined, a hill now, under which the fires of the bridal feast remained smouldering.

VI

We made Bandoeng—as later on Garoet—into a centre for several motor runs. Although the roads in the Preanger Principalities are not so perfect as those of Sumatra, you will forgive an occasional bump and do not even notice it because the supreme beauty of the scenery forces you to look here, there and everywhere, and so you cannot think of anything else. A row of mountain giants hand in hand surround you, and although the mountains at Garoet are of more intensive interest, the various trips through the compounds along the rice-fields to Soreang, Batoedjadjar Tjimahi to the mysterious foaming Dago waterfall, leave a lasting impression of this land of almost idyllic charm.

There are a thousand tints of green. I have never understood why this scenery is called monotonous, especially in the rainy reason ; every shade of green, from the black-green of dusky banyans to the tender yellow-green of bibit rice-fields, may be seen, whilst the blue of the hills and sky in the sawah-mirrors, in which mountain and sky and also banana and coconut-tree are clearly reflected, are likewise of various shades of azure. That day we went over Pengalengan to Malabar, to visit the tea-king, Mr. K. A. R. Bosscha, freeman of Bandoeng. At one time this was " rimboe " (virgin forest). But man was not created to live for ever in virgin forests, although such a primitive existence might be very conducive to his perfect happiness. Man has been created to change the wild face of the earth into cultivated land, and so

Mr. Bosscha, years ago, tried to paint a sweet expression into the grim face of the Malabar mountains.

Banyan trees and climbing bamboos were joined together by giant lianas : Bengal tigers and panthers lay in watch among this confusion. It was exactly as it had been for ages, possibly since the fall of Adam the gardener, when Paradise became a wilderness. It was certainly beautiful in a wild way, but useless to mankind, and Mr. Bosscha preferred a smiling landscape and one which would be useful to man. He pondered about it while he spent many nights in the virgin forest itself, in his tent, listening to the roar of the roused panthers and tigers, who were nevertheless afraid of his wood fire, and after he had pondered for many nights—the days in the virgin forest, which does not allow the sun to enter, are almost like nights—he thought he found a way.

By means of the power which he felt in himself, he decided to transform the ferocious giant's face into a . . . laughing geisha. She would not dance and sing, but she would give you, if you wished it, the delicious fragrant drink which charms away human weariness and gives a man new strength, as it were, in blameless drunkenness—Tea. The ground was cleared. Tea was planted in the gardens of Malabar. But Mr. Bosscha, although a man of business, was a poet as well. For among the tea gardens of the Malabar Company over which he sways his sceptre he has left intact the small virgin forest in which he, the pioneer, spent dark days and still darker nights during his first dreams and researches. The tigers withdrew—culture won—the culture of tea. The geisha of Malabar, not a Japanese one, but a beautiful, blooming Javanese dewi, was born as if by magic, and with Mr. Bosscha she reigns and will reign for long on the slopes of Mount Malabar, after which Malabar, this grand enterprise is called.

We breakfasted with Mr. Bosscha, who himself toasted the bread in a dainty little electric grid, and he told us that this, as well as the electric piano and the whole of the electric services of Malabar were actuated with power generated by the turbulent river. After we had admired

the seismograph, which records every tremor of the ground which is still volcanic here, we went to see Tanara, the tea factory. There are plenty of men working here, otherwise it is a kingdom of women, more female workers than male. The picking, which we saw the day before in the gardens, is done by women too, from the lopped trees varying in height.

It is most interesting to watch the deft fingers of these members of the tea-harem as they busy themselves over the tender leaves. At about four o'clock the women bring in what they have picked wrapped up in cloths, and are welcomed by the music of the gamelan . . . which from a covered scaffolding tinkles out its clear, crystal tones. It is a pretty tribute. Their picking, weighed out in baskets, is paid them according to weight, and the scales indicate very clearly the exact number of cents, so that no calculation is necessary either for those who have picked the low bushes or for the ones who, with so much more skill, have picked the higher ones.

The Administrator who acts as our guide tells us that the still damp leaves will be piled upon racks that night and will be left to " wither," and the well-known aroma of tea which makes the air fragrant only comes into being during the last part of this process. Here is the great fan which sends a stream of air across the racks. Here is a battery of rollers—what imposing machinery is used to prepare our fragrant tea—which, as it were, with two giant metal hands, wring and wring and wring the tea-leaves, after which the little leaves, thrown round and round, dry in the open air.

Here are the dryers—these machines come from England—which, by means of hot air, suck the last particle of damp out of the now quite dry crinkly leaves. Over there the women sit and sort ; their hair is veiled in coloured cloths, as a protection against the dust. They take away any leaves and stalks which are too large—these are used for the so-called " national tea," which, in twopenny packets, is gratefully accepted by the workers as a refreshing beverage, less harmful than unboiled water

from the river. I see the sorting machines cut the leaves fine, and the different brands come pouring through the different-sized meshes of the revolving sieves. Souchong or Bohea. There is a towering winnowing fan : the dust is sucked to the outside and the pure Peco or Pekoe falls down. Perhaps in our Dutch East Indian heart of hearts we do not quite appreciate the fact that this tea imported into England is blended with " Ceylon," and is not considered sufficiently good to be used unmixed.

When we returned to Bandoeng, we drove past various lotus-ponds. Little naked, brown boys went into the water to pick the pink flowers from their long stems for us. These square ponds in between the compounds are astonishingly beautiful with their tender reflections of white clouds and soft blue sky among the blossoms. I saw Bandoeng, full of promise for the future.

We motored from the Lake of Lèlès to Garoet. I had seen the Lèlès Lake more than twenty years before—it had made a very deep impression on me at that time—with large lugubrious " kalong " (bats) hovering over it.

At the end of my novel " De Stille Kracht "[1] I attempted to call up this atmosphere about the chief character, the sorely-tried Resident. A novelist makes use of all his moods, the barbarian ! Now that I saw the Lake of Lèlès again, with its sunken water mirror—there were no bats that morning—I was disappointed. It seemed to me just an insignificant pool with an island in the middle.

It is strange how these moods, called up in an instant, depend on the subtlest tints of light and shadow, of reflection and afterglow. I had been curious to see my own Lake of Lèlès—that of my novel—I did not find it. . . .

These things bring disillusion, and a disillusion, though it may appear unimportant, is in reality of great consequence in the life of an author : after such a disenchantment he considers his whole book bad. At that moment " The Hidden Force " did not seem to me

[1] Translated into English : " The Hidden Force."

a good book, and I could only comfort myself with the thought that none of my books seem good to me after a certain length of time.

Enough about such small things : our work and our disenchantments in connection with it ; the gigantic mountains are about us. We arrive at Garoet and, in all humility and from the depths of my rejoicing heart, I pay a humble tribute to Papandajan, Goentoer and Tjikorai. It is good to stay for a few days among these three kings.

We are in the hotel, called after the first of these three kings and mountain giants : Hôtel Papandajan : proprietor, Mr. Hacks, who started as a confectioner's apprentice in various large hotels in the Hague and Amsterdam, and is now proprietor and manager of a very large hotel which, I may say, is one of the pleasantest in which I have ever stayed. You should hear him tell about the times when he and his young wife lived in a tiny room and, denying themselves even necessities, worked with energy and endurance in order to make their hotel a success. Mr. Hacks conducts us into his luxurious pavilion and insists that the special correspondent of the *H.P.* shall be the " guest " of the Hôtel Papandajan. I was almost embarrassed. It is possible that Mr. Hacks, after being a confectioner's apprentice and a hotel proprietor has become a diplomat, but if this is the case he does it in such an irresistible fashion that I wish all hotel proprietors would receive all special correspondents of much-read weekly papers in this diplomatic manner.

Who of them would not be pleased with these spacious bedrooms, sitting-rooms, front verandah, bathroom, etcetera ? Mr. Hacks does not omit to tell us that the Duchess of Aosta stayed here. My wife will lie on the same couch upon which the Duchess of Aosta rested after her expedition over the Padandajan and Tjikorai. This cannot but appeal to our Italian-minded souls, and makes us even more loyal to the house of Savoy.

" It is a beautiful apartment, Mr. Hacks, and what a good chef you have ! I enjoyed that most delicious lunch."

" I am my own chef, Mr. Couperus," Mr. Hacks assured me modestly. I was somewhat surprised. Has Mr. Hacks time to mix his own sauces ?

Then, changing my tack, I say, " Can you get me a good motor, an excellent chauffeur and a guide for a few days ? "

" Mr. Couperus," answers Mr. Hacks, " may I offer you my motor ' Columbia,' and may I myself be your chauffeur and your guide ? I have known this beautiful country and these roads for twenty years."

I accept, astonished but grateful. It has grown dark, and Mr. Hacks turns on many lights.

" What brilliant electric light ! "

" What shall I say, Mr. Couperus ? I am my own chief electrician. Would you like to see the electric installation to-morrow with the three motors ? But you must have a hot bath first."

A hot bath ? A delicious hot bath ! It is quite true. In this pavilion, situated far away from the central building, a bath is soon filled with hot water. Really, Mr. Hacks is a remarkable man. I found this again and again during the next few days.

VII

Names have their magic symbolism, the names of the points of the compass in particular. To the dweller in the North, the South has a magic sound, and *vice versa*. We came from the North of Java, and consequently wanted to see the South, and with a certain naïve expectation pictured it to be quite different from what it is.

We went from Garoet to the south coast. The three giants, Papandajan, Goentoer and Tjikorai surrounded us in the distance. The Papandajan with its glowing chasm, like an ever-burning wound, steaming always. The Thunder Mountain (Goentoer) with its two princesses or daughter mountains ; the Tjikorai, as though shrouded in the trailing folds of a mantle of majesty. How full of rhythm and harmony is the Tjikorai. We start off in rain and mist. Out of mists and rains the mountains loom up with constantly-changing lines and tints. A gentle sun will triumph, in order to shine without scorching, in silent benediction.

How like an epic is this immense scene, the struggle between light and shade, and good and evil, these colossal, primitive things which at other times man devises . . . they are here before you, among these hills, on this earth, they raise their heads towards heaven.

Mountains and the Titanic epic of nature. . . . Tourists and hotels. We are not heroes, but tourists, and the Dutch East Indian Hotel Company has invited us to come and see its cure-hotels at Tjisoeroepan—Villa Pauline—and Ngamplang. It is cool and healthy here and a refuge for those who are overtired and overworked.

The roads wind—tea and rubber ; there are not many tappers at the rubber-trees, but many swift fingers busy themselves picking tea.

We mount the Pamegalan (16,000 feet) ; see the immense panoramas, the green coconut-groves, shelving away into depths, the forests of tree-fern climbing up steep slopes. Green awnings and fans of State, as it were, for invisible creatures. These are ghostly kingdoms here and invisible people ; kings, who are invisible, reign in cities and palaces among forests and ravines. Sometimes a woman disappears from a compound and months later is found in ecstasy or asleep : when she wakes she says she has been a rice-stamper in the invisible rice-barns of the invisible king, who reigns here. We go right across this shadowy kingdom, in the radiant morning. Once a man walked here in the morning and he saw the sawahs ; when he went back in the evening there was only forest.

All this is wonderful, incredible, and above all vast, very vast—even the horizon, the clouds and the heavens. It is a sacrilege to dash and swing through here in a motor. Mountains and trees, forgive me for what I do. Giants and gods, I am a little sinful man of " modern culture "—so-called—who wishes to see you in the only way which is possible to him. In nervous haste I plunge both eyes and heart into your innumerable beauties. I love and adore you still, oh gods and giants, but I am only I. It seems to me that I am arrogant, but I should like to catch these waterfalls in my hands and drink them in a thirst for your beauty. Forgive me my folly and dreams—laugh at me and grant that my insolent vehicle may hurry along your ravines, past sliding earth and uprooted tree trunks.

For this is the expedition of landslides. There have been heavy showers. Wherever our gaze wanders, we see that the earth has moved and that it is like crystal palace terraces which have tumbled to bits ; columns of coconut trees lie across road and precipice, a bamboo-wood, like a pile of tangled giant ostrich feathers across a

Soendanese Batikker.

Buffalo.

raging, foaming, river. Brown, human hands signal to us from a distance ; in spite of our recklessness, we cannot go on here. The man-made road is covered with earth and mud and broken trunks : a chaos. We stop. Our motor always wins, that small impudent democrat-dictator of the roads puffing right across phenomena and legend. Planks are spread for the car and we feel quite aggrieved at having to be careful and get out to cross the dangerous spots on foot. Our motor, like a mischievous boy, monarch of the roads, hops over difficulties and obstacles. The road is level once more ; we hurry on, and wind and turn in a longing for the sea, the waves of the South.

We shall not reach the sea to-day. It is too far. But all of a sudden we catch sight of the distant breakers. Very far away across this undulating world of mountains, we see the Southern breakers. It is as if our longing is appeased ; the border of a magic kingdom of distant naiads gleams, pure white. . . .

We go to Tjisompet ; then it is time to travel back. A wou-wou, a great holy ape, swings from tree to tree, then squats in the green world of branches, gazing at us. This expedition to Tjisompet is wonderfully beautiful. Before we return to the hotel we see the hot springs of Thipanas. To left and right are square fish-ponds, like large, square grass-edged basins, and once more the liquid rice-fields, rising upwards like steps and stairs. In this late afternoon light the water is clear as a mirror, so that the coconut palm-trees are mirrored in them and their image is scarcely dimmer than the reality. The palm-trees are not stirred by the faintest breath of wind. The owner of one of these fish-ponds is a wealthy man; goerrhamés—most delicious fish—are caught here. Close to the primitive bathing-establishment warm waters and warm fountains well up, here and there ; the fish-ponds are always lukewarm. The living fish is in its element, and so the poor goerrhamé is prepared by nature for cooking, but without any cruelty. There are rows of very simple bath-rooms; usually only natives take

advantage of these hot springs. It is surprising that there is no large hotel here.

If at Garoet you want to revel in bright colours and crowds, then betake yourself in the morning to the market. Piles of fruit and vegetables gleam and glow. Little Chinese and native communal kitchens, with a variety of pastries and cool, green drinks, lure the market-goers. From special saleswomen they buy the sirih—a betel-leaf which they chew, and everything that appertains to it, and they will arrange it in round, copper sirih-boxes, with kapoer or chalk, gambier—a little square block of fragrant root—which usually comes from China, and a pang-nut cut into small pieces. It seems to me that the betel-leaf, which is so carefully prepared with these ingredients, is not so generally chewed as it used to be. The women's mouths are not so blood-red with betel-juice as of old. There is sometimes even a white gleam about their teeth as they smile at you.

These Sundanese women, with their sweet, often pretty faces, are noticeable because of the pale, sometimes pink colours of their cabayas, so different from the indigo-blue, which we shall see later in Middle Java, and which gives a dark, almost black appearance to a market-crowd, with an occasional patch of vivid colour. They are vain, these women, with their flowery sarongs, their pale-hued cabayas and their yellow and black slendangs across the shoulders. No native woman leaves her house without this slendang or long scarf. Their hair is shiny with coconut oil ; there are jewels and pins and flowers stuck into their coils of hair ; they buy flowers from the market-women ; kenanga-petals, rose-leaves, melati-buds strung together to put among the smoothly-folded garments in their clothes'-chests or to use as a necklace.

From the market we went to the government pawnshop, and we were struck by the fact that the well-to-do Sundanese deposited their gold ornaments as if it had been a bank, actually pawning them. We saw very attractive, finely-embossed skull-caps and head ornaments. Whenever there is a festival the owners fetch these heir-

looms from the pawnshop, in order to pawn them again the next day, so that they will be kept securely in the safe.

At the invitation of the Dutch East India Hotel Company, we saw the Hotel at Ngamplang as well. It is a sanatorium, looking out on a lovely, vast mountain panorama. The fairies of the East Indian Hygieia flit about here and pour out bowls of new health.

We went through a teak-avenue—straight trunks, feathery clusters of flowers among sawahs and fish-ponds—the smooth, square, watery mirrors reflecting sky and hills and trees, all wondrously beautiful—to the lake of Bagendit. This is a tourist-lake, but as a matter of fact it is much finer than the Lèlès Lake from which I took away such very moving memories twenty years ago. . . . Tourists are always received here with angklœng music; the young musicians know quite well how pleasing to the tourists' ear are the clear tones of the angklœng—Garoet is sprinkled with its crystal tones. It is a primitive instrument made of rugged, loose hollow bamboo stalks—like a simple harp of bamboo—which only requires to be shaken and moved. . . . The loose, hollow bamboo-tinkle is clear as crystal in the harp's frame and it is as if nature itself is singing the song of wind and reeds in the water. Compared with the melody of the gamelan, these angklœng notes are nothing but a tender, primitive tinkle, simple and clear and idyllic.

Girls offer us waroe-flowers, yellow blossoms and katjapiring, which is really the button-hole flower of our youth, the alabaster gardenia. And on a covered-in raft, on which there are chairs—a raft which lies across two proas carved out of hollow tree-trunks—the tourists seat themselves. Girls come into the proas and paddle the raft. Tall reeds arise on the banks of the lake: water-narcissi lie there in full bloom. It is an idyll, this lake—so often nature is idyllic in India—a pastoral scene among mighty mountains and phenomenal grandeur.

We paddle towards the hill: there is a cupola. Little naked brown boys indulge in all manner of sport for the

amusement of the tourists : they dive into the lake for oranges, which are stuffed with "dubbeltjes,"[1] give sham cock-fights, their legs interlocked and butting into one another, until one or the other tumbles down the slope. In the meantime the women wade through the low water to fish ; they spread their nets, driving the fish and shrimps into shoals between two tree-trunk proas, where the net is spread, then empty the full nets into the baskets which crown their heads. There are sudden clouds, as we move about on the water ; a threatening thunderstorm, a slanting shower across the lake. The girls in the proas paddle the float, which is decorated with flowers now, through lashing rain. The women who are busy fishing hurry, and the small naked boys who fought like cocks hurry along and take shelter under banana leaves which they have rapidly cut—so that they shall not get wet ! . . .

Towards sunset we arrive home. It is not raining any longer. In front of our pavilion the gigantic kenanga-tree scatters its fragrant star-like flowers incessantly. Banyans, elephantine of stem, their trunks and pachydermic limbs as it were grown together, fill the garden with darkness and strange mystery. But the little musicians, who know that tourists love the clear tones of the angklœng, begin to sprinkle them pure and tender and crystal-clear in this hour, full of mystery. . . .

[1] Small silver coin, twopence.

VIII

TWENTY years ago I went up the Papandajan at night. I remember as we passed through the dark clouds which surrounded us, the craters with their red columns of smoke, the chasms with yellow glowing sulphurous vapour, the bluish-violet, slate-grey, purplish fumes reminiscent of a cauldron at an hour which was neither night nor day, and which had nothing at all of the dawn in it.

We did not repeat this splendid expedition. I can well remember how tiring it was and how the lively little horses sniffed anxiously at the demoniacal things which they suspected. We did this time what we did not do last—we went up the Kawo-Kemodjan. We motored from Garoet to Tjiparai, and already in the early morning, the three giants—Papandajan, Goentoer and Tjikorai—were round about us like giants in a fairy tale, as it were, trailing their long, ever-changing slopes through a last shower of rain and through dispersing mists. What a reward for recklessness it is when you start off on a long expedition in rain and mist and are met by a clear young sun smiling at you like the golden " eye of day " (mata-hari), from among mountain passes, the hill gates to the low, wide, undulating valleys.

" Tandoes " are ready for us, but when I see them I regret not having taken a horse, although riding up and down hills is a no more ideal manner of progression than it is to be carried by eight coolies in a tandoe. I also feel a physical revulsion as I take a seat in a fairly-comfortable carrying-chair with a bamboo awning, four

sweating, toiling coolies on either side of it. But the men, as though laughing away my scruples, remain cheerful whilst with many jolts and jerks which stir up my inside, they heave up the narrow path from where, in front of my downward-gazing eyes, the ravines fade away into deep precipices. They remain gay and hungry too, I believe. At any rate they persuade the mandoor to buy some " lemper " for a couple of cents at any little shop which we happened to pass. Lemper is boiled rice wrapped in a banana leaf—a thick, square packet, almost like a little parcel, and the mandoor, who walks unencumbered at the side, gives each coolie a lemper-packet, which he quickly seizes with one hand and demolishes, bearing his burden all the time.

I set aside my scruples as a disciple of equality for all; the fact that I am being carried by eight coolies cannot be altered now. They sweat, they pant, they laugh. I talk to them; they are not unfriendly. They do not appear to have any objection to carrying me up the hill. I feel like Radamès in the third act of Aïda when, driving in a triumphal chariot into Thebes in the opera, he is carried by men, not drawn by horses. A four-in-hand cannot drive up this narrow path. It is a triumphal progress after all, but not an easy one. Oh, if only I were on a horse I should get through in an hour's time, but in this sedan-chair I am shaken up like a will-less bag of sawdust, and my stomach rises to my throat.

" Balek ! " the coolies shout in turn. " Turn round ! " and those who want to, change the bamboo pole from the left to the right shoulder or *vice versa*. A bump, a violent shaking, and the bamboos are placed on a different shoulder. After a little while a shoulder-weary coolie shouts again " Balek ! " and, with a shake and a bump, my weight is once more brought to the first centre of gravity.

If we were not going through the primeval forests I could not endure it. Now, however, the secret of the wilderness on the one side and the precipice on the other keep me occupied. I can see the splendid warfare of each

Fish-ponds at Tjipanas.

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leaf, each branch against other branches and leaves. The one which has the strongest growth wins. Each tree, each leaf, struggles with another tree, another plant. Trees face each other, man to man, branches flex arm against arm, leaves press leaf against leaf.

Each leaf, each branch tries to win its place in the sun. There are dark shadowy spots of slaughter, there are joyous open spaces of conquest. The victors win for themselves the sun, the vanquished are laid low on the earth. The sombre battlefields lie hidden and black; the conquerors exult in a golden glory of gleaming sunshine on the mountain flanks. Here gaudy plumaged birds sing their hymns of triumph—there vermin and vipers thrive among dying tree-trunks and rotting leaves. This confusion in the virgin forest, scarcely stirred by a breath of wind, is the silent struggle of trees and leaves, hardly audible but undeniably visible.

Over there the tree-ferns have gained a brilliant victory. Curved sceptres shoot upwards from chair-like stems and unfold themselves with the giant leaves of a tertiary period, which we had only known in miniature of degeneration. The tree-ferns triumph, they fill entire ravines; they form entire forests—we see them always as we climb past sawahs and fish-ponds, like square mirrors. Then coming out of the virgin forest we see cloudy skies, smoke emerging from craters, the drowsy haze of fires kindled by human hands fading into airy mists of water or smoke. A smell of sulphur floats about us, the craters smoke: we climb out of the "tandoes." Blue-grey, lead-coloured and yellow is the sulphur-oxidised earth, is the grass and the ground, are the rocks and even the tree-ferns once so triumphant and now drooping, limp and lifeless. For here is once more the witches' kitchen.

As it were, with the wide jaws of savage beasts, of hydra-headed monsters, the volcanic earth vomits among boulders and grottos, mud and nauseating fumes. The mud bubbles, boils, seethes, and heaves; your foot sinks into it, if it is not swallowed up by this floating mud which barely congeals. The sulphur-lake lies there, a grey,

leaden pool of hell. To each blade of grass adheres a white and blue-grey fur. We defy the hydra-jaws and fill them up with lumps of earth, but suddenly the earth trembles beneath our feet, rocks and swings us and, in a fury, the hydra-jaws vomit awful mud, which seethes and stinks : this fury only because we tried to stop his jaws.

What visions this volcanic phenomenon, although it does not threaten immediate danger and cataclysms, give us of what happened here in by gone years, when the mountains raged and the earth split into precipices.

We return. The " tandoes " are decked like arbours with green festoons and garlands of flowers. The coolies do this not so much to render homage to whoever they are carrying but in the hope of receiving a bigger tip. What tourist could resist this tribute of flowers and wreaths ? And how tastefully they do it ! Down we go, swaying on their shoulders, down the mountain-paths, through the virgin forest. The afternoon is hot and sultry. In the branches of the gigantic canary-trees we see the man-sized apes, the loetongs. They look at us ; sometimes in the shade they seem one in form and colour with the mighty vegetation which surrounds them. Then suddenly they give a violent spring ; the branches crack ; leaves pour down ; they leap from branch to branch, and now only can we see how large they are with their long grasping arms and swinging bodies.

On approaching the compound where we dismount we hear some very curious " randoek " music. Double-flutes, and seven-flute. How charmingly pastoral and antique in effect are those primitive instruments. There is a long hollow bamboo which by means of an inner stick gives two or three notes as an accompaniment. And then attached to a yoke there are two weighted bamboos decorated with profiles carved out of black wood, called the " king " and the " queen," which are shaken and thumped up and down, giving a rural concert, which, however, was not quite so fine as the " ankloeng." And in honour of the tourists and the expected tip there is a

ram-fight ; fine, strong young rams, white and black and piebald, knock their square heads against each other and " close " like wrestlers.

Quite different from the Bangendit Lake, which is more or less laid out for tourists—an increasing number of Americans and Australians travel across Java nowadays—is the quieter Pendjaloe Lake. There is an atmosphere of calm over the large island, Noesah-gedeh, where the trees, which are never lopped, grow luxuriantly and swarm with " betets " (green parrots). Even the kalongs, the terrible demoniacal bats, which during the day hang like great motionless black fruit to the trees, causing them first to lose their leaves and then to die, help to give the island a curiously weird atmosphere. Noesah-Gedeh —the large island—is " Kramat "—holy. In former years the Regent lived here ; his regent-house does not exist any more, but he was himself buried here with his blood-relations. The ancient, moss-grown Moslem graves lie there as if covered in old-gold and green velvet, in the deep shade of the high trees, and the grave of the Assistant-Resident, Thils, buried in '32 in this consecrated, but at the same time ghostly, spot which he loved, arises green and yellow from amidst thick, spongy moss.

At night there are ghosts in this island, in the thick forests among these graves. Now and again you can see them. They are the same colour as the damp earth, the moss and humus, and have scarcely retained their shape, narrow and oblong, with two short elevations jutting out, once sculptured, now moss-grown from head to foot. As our covered-in raft which goes round the island glides along the still water the oarsmen utter cries to frighten the kalongs and drive them up, but the bats flap wearily and attach themselves once more, limp and black and uncountable, to the already leafless branches, waiting till the hour of dusk shall fall.

This is full of the emotion which some spots hidden in the interior of Java are able to rouse. It can hardly be expressed, and it is as though our language does not possess the words to describe the atmosphere of these

strange places. This is not holy or consecrated : this is " kramat," and that word alone, untranslatable—because of the emotion which trembles in it—denotes what an island like Noesah-Gedeh, in the Pendjaloe Lake, is.

Spend the night in the Pasangrahan here ; from its front verandah you will have a view over the lake and island. Let the strange, white, magic moon, over there in the smooth pale sky, be to you like a large, pale, staring face. The water across which float the petals of flowers which have been offered to the phantoms in square, folded banana-leaves, reflects the white sky and the white light. Everything is incomparably still. Not a parrot calls from the island—the last bat has flapped away on limp wings. The leafless trees, on which the bats hang by day, stand up against the colourless night, with black, naked branches. Over there, now no longer visible, only guessed at by our knowledge and our imagination, lies, among the many graves of regents and those dear to them, that other grave of the Dutch official who did not wish to be buried anywhere but on this spot of moss and damp, where the earth took to it all that was dust and where, perchance, his not quite freed spirit hovers at this hour and longs for a final complete deliverance.

Not a sound, not a breath of wind, not even a ripple of water.

IX

As we returned from this beautiful expedition among lakes and mountains, we were reminded that these were the months of landslides. An immense landslide was signalled to us, the road was destroyed but had been more or less put right ; no motors were allowed to come past as yet. With a special permit, however, it became possible, and accordingly the car—we had stepped out of it —went first across planks at the most dangerous spot and then across mats which covered the repaired road. It was an impressive sight. The hill slope had fallen in ; the sawahs looked like great mirrors broken into bits, with pools and crushed padi-plants which had been flung down from the top. Coconut-palms uprooted and overturned lay like swooning figures amongst the confusion of their feathery crests, with the wrenched-off coconuts scattered in the mud.

And our motor passed slowly, slowly through this confusion while it seemed as if the jutting tree-trunks might collapse any moment and roll over on to it. And it was only a landslide, which is quite a common occurrence in these months of rain in the Preanger Regencies, only a few sawahs and a few palm trees which had fallen down. But it looked like a gigantic cataclysm. And then I understood that if anything were really to happen on a gigantic scale in these lands after a volcanic eruption or an earthquake between these mountain flanks, it would be Titanic. For the phenomenon manifests itself in the East on a grander scale than it does in the West. An afternoon shower is like a flood, short, violent,

and overwhelming, and this landslide looked like a catastrophe through which it seemed almost reckless for our car to pass on its way to the plain of Tasik-Malaja. There beneath us lay the landscape, calm and wide, soft green and gold, idyllic, with peasants guiding the buffalo-drawn plough through the sawah-fields, slowly and peacefully. Women and children were gathering bunches of cuttings from the bibit-fields, in order to plant them out in the prepared sawahs whilst the Goddess of Rice was propitious.

I consider it a pleasant duty, here, to thank Mr. Hacks for his excellent attention and hospitality, and Miss Tilly Weisenborn for the beautiful photographs which she gave us : her photographs of Java and also of Bali have been executed with the utmost care. I must also recommend Mr. W. G. Hoogland's guide for the Preanger Regencies to all tourists and thank him again for his personal guidance and extraordinary kindness.

At Tasik-Malaja, we visited the Regent and his wife, the Radan-Ajoe, as we had done at Bandoeng. These Javanese gentlemen often speak excellent Dutch nowadays, which is very convenient for us Westerners when we are not entirely master of the Malay language. I talk Malay to the servants, but I learned my Malay at Batavia as a child, and it is not pretty. It is quite a different matter to speak in Malay to the Regent than to talk to your ayah or your boy. In the first case one is expected to make use of elegant phrases and a wider choice of words and to leave out some more or less Chinese-tinted expressions which have crept into current Malay. It is, for instance, very rude to say " goewa "—I—which is a typical Malay word. I am quite aware that one ought to say " saja," nevertheless I speak a most incorrect Malay, and I *know* very few metaphors in this language. Conversation with both Regents was without restraint and interesting. We discussed various subjects : the difficult position of officials, who should be more appreciated ; the position of the Regents, who ought to have more initiative ; the ethical changes which have taken place under

the Governor-General, van Limburg Stirum (it is said that Mr. Idenburg began this by shaking hands with his gardener in the palace gardens, which caused the gardener considerable surprise. This may be only an anecdote.)

We spoke about gamelan and wajong, and about the ancient epics, from which the shadow-play plots are derived, and the Raden-Ajoe of Tasik-Malaja seemed to know all about Mahabarata and Ramajana. These Javanese aristocrats, whose ancestors are sometimes descended from the heroes of the Buddhist and Javanese epics, are exceedingly courteous and hospitable and in this matter follow Oriental tradition, which is more formal than *our* hospitality and courtesy, but no less pleasant on that account; on the contrary, there is a certain inner genuineness about it and a great deal of kindness. "Why did you go to the hotel? Why did you not warn us? We should have liked to have you as our guests in the Kaboepatan. If you ever return to Tasik-Malaja, do not forget to let us know." And we go on talking about the education of the Javanese children of aristocratic families and about the Kartini Schools. Dutch is taught everywhere, the Javanese girls learn it also now.

But some of them do not wish to be very clever. They are really not feminists, in spite of the example of their talented, sensitive sister, Raden Adjeng Kartini (famous because of her ideas and writings even in America). These maidens, who mature at an early age, rarely think of anything but a future marriage, husband and children in the glowing dreams of their ripening womanhood. They are no less charming and tender because of this; Kartini was an exception which we must appreciate. Most of these noble girls follow atavistically the call of the blood of their very old races, in which the wife was never anything but a woman and a mother, rarely even a mistress.

The Principalities call to us with their secrets, their impenetrable tradition and almost unfathomable soul, which we Westerners find so hard to understand. I have

never been here before; something always came in the way of a projected visit to Soerakarta or Djokjokarta. Now it is really coming to pass. We go by train, and the palms and coconut-palms, those beautiful and stately trees which I love, cannot be counted. Baedeker counted the date palms at Biskra and estimated them at sixty or seventy thousand, I believe: but can these coconut-palms be counted? It seems to me that there are tens of thousands and again tens of thousands. How truly Javanese and Oriental are these immense valleys of palms, across which the train moves. Like a symbol of regal wealth, one palm-valley links itself on to the next.

We are in Solo, and the guests of the Resident and Mrs. Harloff, for which I am very grateful as I hope that the Resident will be kind enough to initiate me into the mysteries of this enigmatical world of the Central Javanese monarchy. The Resident's house is spacious and vast. Nowadays these houses are often partly furnished by the Government. A Resident cannot be expected to furnish an immense dwelling of this sort, where he will only live a few years. The times of profitable auction—when the inhabitants of a place, by way of a courteous farewell, drove up the prices so that an official could go to Holland with a little sum of money—are past. These head officials have to live in palaces surrounded by parks, with a salary of about 1,500 or 2,000 guilders a month.

Any foreigner—English lord or French Government official—would be surprised if he could see behind the scenes. It used to be quite different. Everything was cheaper. There were convicts who followed the Mandoor in a row into the garden of the Residency house—twenty or thirty of them—to cut and water the grass and weed. Now, a couple of gardeners have to accomplish the never-ending work. But owing to the energy of the officials' wives these palatial dwellings are never neglected, in spite of all financial difficulties. There may be fewer servants than there used to be, but they are chosen with care and often become family retainers. One is not waited on as well anywhere else as one is in Java.

Gallery of the Boeroeboedoer.

The Boeroeboedoer.

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In front of the house, in the garden, there is the traditional Dutch tricolour. On either side are soldier-servants in dark uniforms. Mrs. Harloff receives us, as it is the Resident's consulting hour. A throne-room, an immense gallery with at one end a throne under velvet draperies with three seats, a large one for the Governor-General, should His Excellency appear ; at either side one for the Soesoehoenan (usually called Soenan) and one for the Resident. Both seats are exactly the same ; this is laid down by Protocol. And always there is this inevitable throne-room which is only used a few times during the year for official receptions, immense and official, stretching itself right across the home life of the inhabitants and their guests.

It must be rather irksome for these people always to cross the throne-room when they walk from the front gallery to the back gallery. But Indian architecture does not permit any other arrangement. If the Soenan comes officially he can only be received in the front gallery and the Residents lead him by his arm to the throne-room. And they both sit down on identical seats, on either side of the Governor-General's empty seat. Do not forget that the Resident is the Soenan's father in all official addresses or documents and that the Soenan is no more than his son. It is a difficult relationship. The Residents of Solo and Djokja must be both rulers and diplomats, even more than the heads of any other district. There are portraits of the Royal House and of the Soenan and Ratoe ; the frames of these latter portraits are of inlaid wood and the design is the same as is woven into the sarong and Kaïn which are worn by Soenan and Ratoe, and which they alone are allowed to wear as a crest. These portraits are crowned with the Buddhist monarch's crown.

Mrs. Harloff has taken us to the back gallery. It is so large that in former days there were sometimes banquets of seven hundred guests. By means of bamboo screens and groups of plants an attempt has been made to divide up this colossal space into more or less cosy

corners, which are about four times the size of your suites of rooms in Holland. When there are no guests, this part is not used. Exactly behind the gallery is the fabulous ficus-tree, the tree of legend and epic. Its roots are twined about the various trunks, which in their turn were once downward-growing air-roots, like a wide nest of snakes and dragons. They coil over the earth and in and out of the earth, and they are only cut down close to the house so that a path may be formed and so that they shall not destroy the building. When one sees a tree of this sort and imagines that free and untrammelled it might grow rampant for centuries with its branches and roots—roots from the air and from the ground—one might picture it conquering the whole globe, so that in the end there would be nothing in the earth but *one* gigantic ficus-tree, which had made the whole world into one universal primeval forest.

A couple of dreamy, white angora cats walked in front of us in the park. Our hostess created this model garden. Do not think, oh reader, that the wife of a head official in the Dutch East Indies can allow herself to be lazy and to dream on a couch. The whole organisation of this household rests on her slim shoulders. And our hostess did not shirk the burden of the laying-out of this fine garden.

Our men and women in India cannot fail to be admired on account of their energy. It is as though they refuse to bow to the climate, which saps everyone's energy here. It is as though their resistence is doubled, even though the heat undermines their body and mind. They all work here, the official in his sphere, the planter in his, and their wives, especially those of the head official—who are often their husband's private secretaries—work no less hard.

I render the homage of my admiration to Mrs. Harloff as the representative of her brave sisters.

X

At Solo I have the feeling that secrets are going to be revealed before my eyes, as if Sphinxes with Buddha faces will set me riddles which I shall have to solve. It is like a " hantise " which seems to emanate from this strange, mysterious condition, from this atmosphere of enigma, which hovers about the Principalities, which I shall experience here, as in Soerakarta and later on in Djokjokarta; an atmosphere woven out of a Buddhistic past and a tradition of Eastern potentates, now Western and Eastern diplomacy have settled down fatalistically and the glorious times of primeval autocracy are done with.

And it also makes me wonder how long this atmosphere will continue to weave itself, how long these strange conditions which are so difficult to fathom and to control will last in a world, which is becoming rapidly modernised, and where the people's leaders, European, Indo, Javanese —are bestirring themselves. I do not know, I will not venture to predict or prophesy. As a matter of fact, the Present, with a backward glance at the Past, is interesting and rich enough to make us hazard a guess at the Future.

The Resident of Solo, Mr. Harloff, who seems to be born and destined to fulfil the difficult task of ruler and diplomat here, is also a most courteous host, and is kind enough, during the few short moments which he has at his disposal, to give his guests the historical information which is necessary in order to penetrate into the secrets of the Principalities. This information shows me that the Soesoehoenan—we shall in future talk of the

Soenan in Solo—by heredity and legitimately, is considered by himself and his adherents the only monarch over the ancient heritage of the kingdom of Mataram, which in former ages occupied Central Java. About two centuries ago, however, a rebellious native prince brought about the Civil War which separated the primeval kingdom into the Principalities of Soerakarta and Djokjokarta. The Dutch East India Company, remembering their motto : " Divide and rule," and thinking that they were following a policy which would be to their advantage, reported the rebellious prince who had seized Djokjokarta. Consequently both Principalities were maintained. Djokjokarta took the ancient name of Mataram. The Soenan, always called Pakoe Boewono, the Pivot of the World, and also Kalipatoelah, Chief of Religion, remained throughout the ages, in the eyes of the Javanese, surrounded by a mystic glory reflecting the old Hindu-Buddhistic legend. The heraldic crown of the Soenan is a Buddhistic ornament still.

But a further division had been ordained by Allah. About a century ago a member of the ruling house, named Mas-Said, rebelled against the Soenan of the time. He had his followers and the revolution which he brought about was successful. The Dutch authorities once again followed a policy which they thought would be to their advantage, by supporting his rights on the part of Soerakarta, which had been conquered by him, and so in the South of Soerakarta, the kingdom of the Mangkoe Negoro (he who carries the world in his lap) came into being. It went on living and includes a third part of that district with a third of the population of the whole of Soerakarta. The prince, who has always been upheld, resides at Solo itself. Before his fortieth year his title is Prang-Wedono, after that he is called Mangkoe-Negoro. Later on, in Djokjokarta, we shall see how a similar state of affairs parallel to that in Soerakarta came about. Let us, however, for the sake of greater lucidity, remain in Soerakarta, at Solo.

The Soenan and the Mangkoe-Negoro, or Prang

Wedono, if he has not reached the age of forty, are two entirely independent monarchs, who each have their own Regent, and need not have anything to do with each other. This is the official, legalised state of affairs. In reality, in deep-rooted reality, it is all quite different. The years have come and gone and the decendants of Mas Said, the rebel, although they might be seated on the Mangkoe-Negoro throne, could not resist worshipping the Soenan as the one and only ruler over everything which at one time constituted the kingdom of Mataram. And the psychic evolution which revealed itself in these Eastern people was stronger than the once successful, purely-material revolution perpetrated a century ago by a rebellious prince whose ambition proved stronger than his reverence for the heaven-sent monarch, the Soenan. Try to penetrate into the soul of this other prince. Will you find anything but the greatest veneration for the rightful heir of Mataram, the Soenan ?

However this may be, the Soenan addresses the Prang Wedono—or Mangkoe Negoro—in low Javanese. The prince answers in the highest high Javanese, with all the linguistic etiquette of an inferior towards a superior. These distinctions in Javanese are so difficult and complicated that there is hardly a single Dutch official who professes to have mastered the Javanese language.

A resident of Solo always converses with the Soenan in Malay and not in Javanese, in order to avoid the pitfalls of this most difficult language. At the same time the preservation of the actual, because psychical inferiority in the East—the mysteries of psychology, are everything, in fact the pivot round which the world revolves—of the prince towards the Soenan, who is reverenced almost like a god—is promoted as much as possible by inter-marriage. The Prang-Wedono—now thirty-six—is married to the younger sister of the Ratoe (consort of the Soenan, Empress) ; the title also indicates an imperial princess. He is thus, in a sense, the Soenan's brother-in-law, and if he appear at the latter's Court he is, on account of this intermarriage, absolutely

his inferior. And, accordingly, etiquette reduces this independent prince inexorably to the deepest respect and "hormat."

The position of the Soenan towards the Dutch Government is very clearly outlined. It is that of vassal and feudal lord. By the grace of our Queen and the Governor of the Dutch Indies, the Soenan reigns independently over Soerakarta. There is a Treaty which regulates the position. What is the natural consequence? Both Principalities, that of the Soenan and the Mangkoe Negoro, form part of the Dutch Indies. All laws for the Dutch Indies are legal for the Principalities, excepting where other provisions have been made. The independent rule of these Javanese Monarchs only includes matters of a local nature. For all epidemics, cattle sickness and army orders are, of course, valid for the Principalities, even if they have to be enforced without the co-operation of the self-governors. Yet with this system of self-government they can exert a great influence. Do not forget how the Javanese reverences his monarch, and how in his heart of hearts he must bear a grudge for this curtailment of his power. In the midst of the rampant growth of intrigue and secrets and hopelessly tangled ideas of monarchs and princes, pangerans and raden ajoes, who conceal beneath the greatest courtesy that psyche which they never manifest, but which cannot but be hostile, consciously or sub-consciously, to the Dutch usurpation—stands the Resident.

He guides—both with authority and diplomatically, the course of affairs. He is captain of the mysterious ship of state on this sea full of hidden rifts and cliffs; he tries to lead in a democratic manner, and the hidden opposition which he feels is comprehensible. Nothing but a studied egotism forces these Javanese rulers not to oppose the Resident. If they refuse to move from their feudal standpoint, the people who are already stirring at the instigation of their leaders would in a few years demand that which is now, little by little, being granted by the Governor.

Four years ago, under Resident Harloff, a beginning was made with a re-organisation of the Principalities which is expected to become an established fact during the next few years. Then the Principalities will have come through a phase which will be like the transition from a mediæval state to a modern one. This reformation has altered literally every branch of administration—Government, finance, police. By the Soenan's side in the Principalities stands the Resident, and his position is possibly more difficult than that of any other Resident.

The Soenan, who has never been recognised by his subjects as feudal autocrat, rules according to Eastern tradition, but does not govern with his own hands. They are too sacred for this purpose. He has his Grand Vizier or Regent, and no law or bye-law is valid unless it has been signed by the Regent and . . . the Resident. Yet this Regent is a very mighty man in all the intrigue which is naturally spun in the wide mysterious space of the Kraton, where three thousand women weave their more than ten thousand webs of intrigue. The Resident, although officially chosen, is a prince by heredity. As a matter of fact every post in this sphere is hereditary, and each servant, even the most inferior one, a nobleman. This is the custom at the Solo Court.

Four years ago there were no municipalities or "desvas," consequently no municipal Government or police. The ground belonged to appanage holders, always related to the monarch or his officials, who were given land as well as financial help. The vast domains included fields, rivers, woods, and also settlements belonging to subjects who had then to work for the appanage holders. In the exploitation of these domains no attention was paid to the people's interests. During the last few years a great deal of this mediæval state of affairs has been changed, and that very rapidly. To begin with, these alterations were not always appreciated by the Javanese small holders, who were also conservative and clung to all the ancient tradition. Recently, however, they have learned to appreciate these improved modern conditions.

It is curious that it happens to be in Java, in the heart of the Principalities and in spite of this re-organisation, that the revolution is in process of being roused. Dr. Tjipto Mangoon Koesomo, Hadji Misbach and Douwes Dekker are revolutionary elements. Dr. Koesomo was, at the suggestion of Resident Harloff, banished from the provinces, in fact from the whole of Central Java. Hadji Misbach was condemned to two years' imprisonment. Douwes Dekker charged with being an agitator, was, in spite of a statement by fourteen witnesses, set free, but was later on condemned at Bantam for *lèse-majesté*.

Before describing the wonderful things which I saw in the Kraton at Solo, I wish to give my readers an idea of the unfathomable conditions in the Principalities. They are all slumbering "Hidden Forces." It is all an enigma, and a riddle which, with Hindu-Buddhistic tendencies on the one side and on the other calling up the most modern problems, is to my mind insoluble.

What will come of all this? How will it all have developed in a future century? What is the future of the Principalities in the future of Java and the Dutch Indies? Who would dare to answer these questions? The Javanese is born a subject of the Soenan; his soul still remains feudal and mediæval: the Kraton still remains to him a temple, a sacred residence for a heaven-sent monarch. Here he sees his legends made real in visible pomp and magnificence, and in the dance of srimpis and bedojos. All these things are steeped in tradition. Etiquette sways the same sceptre as it did ages ago.

But outside the Kraton modern forces sweep onwards. They must make those who rule inside shudder with apprehension . . . but nothing happens as yet. No sharp reprimand is uttered from inside these walls; no brutal attack is aimed at these age-old gates. Everything waits, everyone waits. Inside, however, everyone crouches round and about the Soenan—no Javanese stands in front of his monarch—and the three thousand women, the Ratoes and Raden-Ajoes and their maid-servants, who are slaves, take council together. The

Soenan when the doors of the Kraton are closed at night is alone with three thousand women. No man waits on him or is near him. And it is during these hours that the secret " obat " and poisons are mixed, which were once so potent, but which now will be of no avail against what must come in the mysterious Future.

XI

Now that my reader knows who the Prang-Wedono is, I can, without fear of being misunderstood, try to describe the wonderful spectacle which we saw at the palace. It was a Wajang-Wong performance of a melodramatic play, in which live actors, not dolls, performed. It is difficult to describe these open spaces in the Javanese palaces: they are sometimes high, sometimes low, always spacious, and within their walls there is scarcely any façade; shut off from the outside world, they have no other beauty but those of the inner roof; the beams and rafters, which are often carved and gilded, look like elusive sunbeams up above, or lower down like the darts of a setting sun. There are courts and galleries, but I cannot find much style about the arrangement of these vast spaces. A more modern part, which is destined for the apartment of the Prang-Wedono's wife—she is a younger sister of the Ratoe of Solo—was not exactly tasteful. But it had an ideal bathroom which visitors were allowed to see because the Ratoe was not using it yet.

The seats upon which the Resident and Mrs. Harloff, the Prang Wedono and Ratoe, with their guests sat down were arranged in a semi-circle. The stage was not built yet; there was a door to one side by which the actors were to enter, the gamelan was placed in that vicinity. The "dalang" (interpreter), who also sat there, would by means of a knocker beat time for song and dance on the low partition. There was electric light, but the outer court melted into the dusky twilight, where squatted a number of servants and dependents; on the left side

crouched the young non-commissioned officers of the Prang-Wedono's legion ; on the right side sat on wooden benches pupils from the Javanese schools ; girls and boys, who probably knew all about the play which was to be performed: they are taught the beauties of Ramayana and Mahabarata ; the Javanese shadow-plays are either derived from these epics or are very like them.

The more or less hybrid costume of Javanese princes, the Prang-Wedono and kindred princes, consists of a sarong with his own pattern, bare feet in sandals, a short blue cloth coat (with a decoration) over a white shirt and white waistcoat, a black tie, a gold crease stuck into the girdle, and a head-cloth wound gracefully round his forehead. The highest in rank sat on the back chairs ; lesser lights and young noblemen—I will spare you all the hundreds of titles and dignitaries—squatted further back.

None of this was so very impressive. For centuries it has been half-Western and half-Oriental, and the prettiest touch about it was the little slender form of the Ratoe in her tight-fitting pale silk cabaya, with white flowers and jewels in her hair, and enormous diamonds—rarely brilliants—in her ears and on her breast. Refreshments were placed on small marble tables. And here I must mention a pretty speech made to me by the Prang-Wedono. When he heard that I had written " Iskander " —all these princes know about Alexander the Great—he said : " How we should appreciate it if you were our ' dalang ' (interpreter) ! " It was a joke, of course, but a charming compliment.

Programmes were handed round, and so I read that we were to see the play of Dewi Angreni. It is taken from the so-called Pandji-cycle, and was considerably abridged ; without being shortened the play would have lasted for many hours, possibly days. It was really more a pantomime than a tragedy. There was very little dialogued, and that was muttered. It was, above all, a play of gesticulation and expression, and I liked it immensely. I was much struck by the fact that it was a lyric and not an epic tragedy. Love, however tragic,

triumphed over all other passions, although the end was tragic death. I had never thought that the Javanese stage could give us anything quite so moving.

Pandji Kasatrya is a Prince. Against the will of his father, the King, he married Angreni, the Regent's daughter. They come on with a body-servant and two fools, deformed favourites. These Shakespearean figures had little to do apart from looking comical. But we soon saw that the tragic hero and heroine were Shakespearean also. They move in the deliberate slow manner of tradition. The hero approaches, the upper part of his body naked and about his waist a long, draped kaïn, walking with his feet wide apart. He is very thin and slender, his gestures are graceful, as they should be. Angreni is a poetical figure and the actress who took her part must be conscious of the fate of tragic love which hovers about this woman, who seems akin to Desdemona, Julia, and Ophelia ; her sweet, pale-amber, flower-like face, under its arched, golden Hindu coronet, expresses all the pathos of her ill-fated sisters.

Inexorableness and inevitability weigh down her tender body and soul. And this is expressed in her face and every movement of her body. The bowed head, the curved line of her slender back, the helplessness of her slender arms ; the bend of the knees under the trailing kraïn, the little open hands, as it were, imploring pity. All these denote a victim whom tragedy drags to destruction, by the side of a tragic hero. What she said was scarcely articulated, but it was of no great consequence. The gamelan emphasised every word, not tenderly enough according to the Prang-Wedono, who did not seem satisfied with his musicians. Now and then the " dalang " explained something and scanned the rhythm with his wooden knocker. The spectators were moved to pity.

The Prince Kasatrya has committed an act of great disobedience against his father and King by wedding Angreni and going to live with her for a year and a half. Far away, in his palace, the Prince has been betrothed since childhood to his cousin, Princess Schartadja.

During all the time of his disobedience he has not waited upon his father, the King. In this sphere, such things are crimes against the system of the world instituted by gods and kings. He who perpetrates such crimes commits a sin which must be punished. The tragic deed is done. A Prince who places his forbidden love above obedience to his King and father, has committed a tragic crime.

Angreni herself sees how great is the crime which Kasatrya and she have been tempted to commit. She implores him to pay the prescribed visit to his father, to part from her, so that he may pacify the King's anger. But with him, love still reigns supreme. A Buddhistic nun, a sister of the King, comes to warn the Prince. Her costume is resplendent, almost bewildering. But its beauty symbolises her sanctity, which amounts almost to divinity. The Prince refuses and even bids defiance to exile, with which the nun, in accordance with the King's message, threatens him.

Angreni remains alone with sad forebodings; she glories in the love of her Prince, but an inexorable Fate will break both of them.

As ambassadors of the King of Kediri—father of his destined bride—her two brothers come on. The parallel gestures which expressed these exquisite characters were most graceful. It was remarkable to see how both their attitudes and the even folds of their robes were identical as they sat in reverence before the King. They urge with the greatest courtesy that the Prince Kasatrya should wed their sister; she is marriageable and many kings desire her. Kasatrya's father assures them that the marriage will soon take place.

At last, the disobedient Kasatrya waits upon his father. The angry, heroic King and now seemingly docile son are featured in beautiful " wajang " poses. Anger and obstinacy are both dissimulated—by compliance in the case of the father, by apparent obedience in the case of the son. When Kasatrya is asked whether he will wed his cousin he refuses.

Father and son part, dissembling. The King, exceedingly angry, summons his eldest son, whose mother is a concubine. Like all the characters in this tragedy she also is a noble figure. Traitors or malicious characters who drive forward the action with evil deeds do not appear. This is almost a refinement of later tragedy; tragedy here is only developed in the feelings and state of mind of the characters. Love, disobedience (always remember how important this is in an Oriental sphere) in the case of the son, loyalty to his father and the wish to fulfil a sacred promise; and with Angreni love, grievous sadness, and the desire to sacrifice herself. No dramatic happenings; the events are all psychological, exquisitely expressed.

The eldest son who was summoned is called Raden Ario Bradjamata. His appearance is martial and heroic. He also becomes a hero of tragedy in so far as his father gives him a crease—called the "Red Flame"—so that he may guard the virtue and greatness of the kingdom. The hero knows what this means. He is asked to murder Angreni. He implores mercy for himself and for her; the King remains inexorable, the holy promise must be fulfilled, the order of the world must be restored. The hero will not be disobedient like his brother, the Queen's son and successor to the throne. He goes to Angreni. We see her in a state of violent emotion. She acted the part of anxious waiting and wondering if her husband will return very well. He does not come . . . She has been troubled by dreams. She saw again her own long marriage procession, but blood was pouring down from heaven. All this is expressed by a look of anguish on the sweet little face, and by the shivering movements of the slender arms and hands.

Bradjamata appears. He tells her that the Crown Prince has been sent forth by the King to seek for gold in the depths of the sea. Is it the gold of obedience and virtue in the stormy sea of human passions? I do not know.

And he has come himself to fetch her, because his

brother cannot endure being far away by the sea without seeing her, Angreni.

She understands. She sees through his plans. She sees in Bradjamata's girdle two creases, his own and the "Red Flame." Fate is inevitable. A carrying-chair is brought; she steps into it. She stepped into this palanquin which she knew was to lead her to her death, although not a single word had been spoken. Her tender gestures, full of feeling, were enough to bring tears to our eyes. . . .

She is taken away. Bradjamata follows. When the door of her palace is locked her serving-maids burst into sobs.

We did not see her death. We did not see how the disobedient Prince showed his remorse; how Bradjamata, the obedient Prince, spends his further life in a hermitage.

Presumably the order of the world, power and obedience have triumphed. A Javanese tragedy differs from a Greek one, for the victim has pacified the gods. Tender, sweet Angreni, the cause of the crime, was sacrificed, but because the gods were yet merciful, she was not killed by an assassin, but by a hero and a warrior, with a crease: the "Red Flame." . . .

It was a very fine performance, although it was abridged in order not to try our Western patience too much. And I was greatly moved, chiefly because, in spite of everything, women and love were glorified in this tragedy, and because all these Javanese seemed to love and weep over Dewi Angreni (Dewi—princess or goddess) as all we Western readers of Shakespeare love and weep over Desdemona or Ophelia.

XII

NEXT day the daughter of the Regent of Solo was married. We were delighted to have the opportunity of witnessing a Javanese wedding. These marriages between Javanese princes and princesses are solemnised in accordance with the ancient "adat," in two ceremonies, the Ningkah, the actual marriage, at which the bride is not present, and the Temon: the first meeting in the evening of the newly-married couple, who, officially, have never met before.

We betook ourselves in the morning to the Kepatihan, the official residence of the Regent, Raden Adipati Djojo Negoro by name. The spacious pendopo was already half-filled with squatting Javanese relatives and officials, all men. There were no women present excepting our own European ladies. We seated ourselves in a wide semi-circle. Besides the Regent, there were present his father, who had been Regent before him for thirty years, and is a statesman of some importance, and the Soenan's eldest son, Pangeran Nga-Behi.

Rays of sunshine fell slanting with a blinding light underneath the sloping roof into the spacious pendopo, and were reflected in the marble tiles of the floor. On these square, shiny mirrors, the dark forms were seated, cross-legged, watching in solemn state.

Dark the tight-fitting coats, brown in colour the dark sarongs, the turbans drawn tight about the temples. Silence. Scarcely a word is spoken. Such a deep stillness that it had an almost enervating effect on us Europeans, with the three great Javanese, seated in the wide circle.

Why cannot we be placid like this? Why are we always boisterous and fussy at our ceremonies? How sober in colour, how simple in line was this awaiting of the bridegroom.

He came. His appearance was very graceful but somewhat theatrical and well adapted to satisfy the curiosity of the European guests. Followed by a retinue of blood-relations, he came from the sunshine outside into the dusky pendopo, a blaze of light behind him, and he was conducted by two kinsmen, each holding a little finger. This mode of progression was anything but simple, but it was exactly what we wished and expected. He was a slim young man—of royal birth, as yet only chief of a district (Wedono), but with a great career before him. The upper part of his body was entirely naked and anointed with "borèh,"—rice-powder mixed with ochre and scented water—and this borèh-paint, which tinges the skin a soft yellow, is Court dress at Solo. His long, bridegroom's "kaïn" (not a sarong, but made of very long batikked material) was draped from the waist in many folds; these folds were gathered into a bustle at the back, such as our ladies wore thirty years ago, trailing into a point behind him; this also is Court dress, an old custom which still exists in the Wajong-Wong. In his girdle was stuck a jewelled, garlanded crease, and his head was covered by a small mitre, transparent white, like a truncated, airy cone, woven into some curious web.

He squatted down and made the sign of the semba—his hands meeting as if in prayer—to his future father-in-law, his exalted relatives and to the Resident. Then the priest, Penghoeloe or Tafsir Anom, sat down opposite to him and said: "In the name of her father, I offer you this bride. Do you accept her? He answered "engeh," yes; and this answer was repeated after several other questions. The Priest then recited the first Soerat of the Koran, which included the creed: "There is only one God . . ." and prayed again, the bridegroom praying with him.

Then the marriage was actually solemnised according

to the Koran. It had, of course, been preceded by various discussions. Officially, bride and bridegroom are unknown to each other; in reality, they have met. But the parents decide and the children have nothing to say.

After the marriage had taken place, the bridegroom squatted down again, and, in a squatting position, crept towards his three seated relatives of exalted rank: father-in-law, his father, and Soenan's eldest son. Then, solemnly, he gave the old ex-Regent the knee-kiss, sideways. This kiss of submission, which lasted a long while, took place after his crease had been taken and his train arranged in graceful folds by one of his retinue. He did the same to the Regent, now his father-in-law; he did it to the Soenan's son, who represented the Soenan himself. It was all very stately, silent and slow; there was no gamelan on account of mourning for the old Sultan of Djokjakarta. Champagne was handed round.

The Regent addressed the bridegroom, now the young husband, who accepted all our good wishes. Then, still squatting, he crept backwards and was led away by his little fingers. He disappeared across the glittering sun-reflecting tiles into a blaze of light, swaying and graceful, trailing his train, the upper part of his ochre-coloured body soft and naked; his flower-decked crease had once more been stuck into his girdle.

That evening the Temon, the meeting of the young husband and wife, took place at the private residence of the Regent, the father of the bride. At the bottom of the central verandah the Bridal Bed had been erected, of gilt, carved wood, with golden pillows; the bed which remains a symbol and upon which the young married couple will not lay themselves.

A coach drives up; there is dignity between the long-stemmed lanterns, carried high; the horses have plumes; the bride, revealed at last to our curious eyes, steps out. Her aunts receive her and lead her inside. These Javanese princesses wear pale silk cabayas, dim twinkling jewels in their coiled hair and ears, and on their breasts. The bride looks tired and slightly discontented.

The Nymphs' Bath, near Tosari.

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The preparations for her toilet have lasted all day. The hair, which has been shorn almost up to the crown of her head, looks as if it had been stuck to her forehead in coils. She wears a diadem as a Hindu ornament, and a hair-net of real flowers, white melatis. Neck and bosom are stained with borèh, and she scintillates with fabulous jewels. Her form is closely sheathed by a velvet corselet; the voluminous train flows down to her feet. Baskets of flowers, fruit and incense are carried in front of her, symbols of riches and plenty. Coconuts are symbols of fruitfulness as well.

A second coach, with festal lanterns carried high, appears. It is the bridegroom and he wears a richer mitre, a longer, wider train. On the elevation in front of the nuptial couch, the bride, now the young wife, awaits her husband. She scatters at his feet some sirih-leaves and an egg, symbols of fruitfulness. Later she will wash his feet as a symbol of submission. A golden basin with water, upon which flowers float, is brought. He stands, she crouches. She sprinkles water upon his feet once or twice and kisses his toe.

Then the Regent, father of the bride, steps between them. He sits down, cross-legged; all three are sitting in front of the bridal bed and the father places his daughter and son-in-law each on a knee. He "weighs" them, with a smile, and he says: "Sami Kemawan," both of you seem to weigh equally heavy. It is as though he were weighing their souls, for how can he justify this "weighing" if the bride should be a slender little maiden and the bridegroom a sturdy fellow? But these Javanese people marry very young and the young men are always slender, almost ethereal looking, and this similarity in weight is quite possible, not only for their souls, but for their slender bodies as well.

After that, first the male and then the female relatives sit down in a row on the ground, whilst bride and bridegroom creep about among them in a squatting position. They give a knee-kiss and a foot-kiss—very long these kisses—to all. It looks like an acrobatic feat. How supple

these people must be to move across the ground so gracefully and according to etiquette, bowing to a knee, stooping to a foot, and bending double in order to give the long kiss.

For us it was the end. We departed after having congratulated the young couple. But we heard that they would have to sit in lesser state, relieved of mitre and bridal crown and the heaviest jewels, until two o'clock, whilst round about them their relatives would remain playing cards on the ground or on the very low round tables at which they continued squatting. Poor young married couple! Not until then should they be divested of all their splendour and the bridegroom be led to the bride. Poor young couple. The wedding night had come at last after a very fatiguing day.

Before we were to be received by the Soenan in the Kraton itself, in the evening, we saw Solo by day. It did not come up to our expectation. All the walls, gateways and roofs of the Kraton seemed insignificant, and without either line or beauty. Anything of interest is concealed within them. What I saw of the town was dilapidated. As a matter of fact all Indian towns—with the exception of Medan and Bandoeng—look as if they were in a state of decay, as if plaster were very dear and lime priceless. Added to this, moss, mould and moisture run riot where they ought not to, and this with great rapidity. So that all buildings are tinted a yellowish green, which lends atmosphere to an ancient building, but in the case of new buildings shows neglect. This may be excused by the fact that the cost of repairs is very high in these times, especially during the monsoon.

In the Museum we saw the colossal prows—dragons and monster's heads—of the Soenan's antique pleasure boats, in which of old they used to go boating on the Solo river. Offerings are still brought to these prows in the form of flowers and incense. As a matter of fact, everything which concerns the old Monarchs is sacred. Later, we went for a fine expedition to Karang-Pandan, a former

pleasure-house of the Mangkoe-Negoro, which will soon be a hotel. Here was a lovely view over distant valleys and rice-fields and to one side the beautiful Lawoe, the mountain of love-herbs; its flanks are covered with herbs which, when mixed with mysterious art, compel you to love the woman who prepared the potion and made you drink it. But the Lawoe seen from the distance looked only like a Titan hill, blue in colour and harmonious in outline, and not at all like a magician or mixer of sweet, intoxicating poison. We did not drink any love-potions but 'legen' or the juice of arenga-palm, and "tegan," which is the milk of a young coconut.

On the way back we passed many native villages and I was struck by the white or sky-blue "toedoengs" (large pointed hats) of the labourers in the wet rice-fields. "Do they wear the Soenan's colours?" I asked. "No," was the answer, "but if there is any white or blue paint left, everything gets a little daub for nothing, and so there is hardly anyone who does not possess a blue "toedoeng."

Hurriedly I scribbled this in my note book. And because I was always scribbling in it, a Javanese village-chief asked Mrs. Harloff, who had accompanied us, most respectfully:

"Who is that gentleman, Kandjeng Njonja Besar?" (Excellent great lady).

Mrs. Harloff reflected for a moment. How could she explain who and what I was?

After she had given the matter a moment's consideration, she answered:

"That gentleman is a 'poedjonggo' from Holland," hereby giving me an honourable title to which I have no real right, for the "poedjonggo" is a historian at the courts of the Principalities.

But, however that may be, during the days which I spent in Solo, the Javanese see in the gentleman with the notebook a "poedjonggo," a "poedjonggo" from the Low Lands of Queen Wilhelmina. A learned man who is collecting all manner of data, in order to make "tjeritas" (stories). . . .

XIII

THAT evening we went to the Kraton. How a tourist must admire the Resident for arranging an expedition of this sort! For it happens fairly often that an evening when the Court dancers are going to dance is set apart for strangers, but it depends on so many things. In this case there was first the mourning on account of the death of the old Sultan of Djokdja; then, when the evening upon which the Soenan was to receive us had finally been fixed, one of his many grandsons died, so that once more the reception had to be postponed. At last we were to go! If you do not see the "srimpis" the "bedojo's" (imperial princesses, or at the very least very noble dancers) dance, your whole tour will be a failure. It is the climax of your travels; it is of more importance than the Boeroeboedoer.

I am not joking. I have seen the bedojos dance now, the nine dancers of the Soenan's own ballet, and I declare that I have never before witnessed a sight so full of rhythm and grace.

After being introduced to the Soenan and the Ratoe —she is a daughter of the late Sultan of Djokdja—we take our places strictly according to ceremonial on the seats which were meant for us. The Soenan sat between the Resident and Mrs. Harloff; the Ratoe on the other side of the Resident; then forming a square with these throne-like seats came the chairs for the Government officials, for the Pangerans and other Ratoes and Raden Ajoos and for us tourists. The most careful thought had been given to each seat. The place in the middle remained

empty; the dance would be performed further up, in the immense pendopo. In the background sat on the floor lesser princes, sons and grandsons of the Soenan, with their retinues. To one side was the gamelan, also the European-Javanese orchestra which was conducted by the Regent Wrekso Diningrat. There was the Wilhelmus (Dutch National Anthem) first, of course.

I was seated between two Pangerans, an uncle of the Soenan and a colonel in his army, but I will not enumerate these sonorous Javanese names. . . .

As we waited, there were refreshments, and it seemed to me that they were not offered in so graceful a manner as I had seen it done more then twenty years ago. For instance, in the Kaboe-paten at Passoeroean, the servants appear moving about in a crouching position with immense trays of glasses and decanters, without upsetting a single glass. Perhaps a stop has been put to this exceedingly difficult acrobatic manner of waiting on democratic grounds; however that may be, I thought the waiting lacked style, although the Soenan was waited on by what appeared to be an orderly official. Conversation was not exactly easy. Unlike many Regents whom I met in Java, these Javanese princes spoke little or no Dutch, and my Malay, as I have already mentioned, is not equal to Solo Kraton conversation (I remind you of the fact that hardly any Dutchman can speak Javanese).

It was stiflingly hot. Although these "pendopos" and other spaces with gardens and courtyards are open like vast pavilions, it was that evening, on account of the rain which would not break loose, but remained hanging low in the sky, stiflingly hot. I could see that even the ladies in their evening dresses were warm: so you can imagine what we poor male victims felt in our tail-coats. I venture to say that we were being slowly stewed, as it were, on a small fire. And as we perspired, we smiled most charmingly and tried to chat to the two exalted Pangerans. You just had to be patient and await in solemn state with an occasional sip at your whisky-and-soda and an occasional glance round about.

Over there are the Soenan's serving-maids with his personal ornaments. I do not know what all these golden objects are. A crease, a box, a spittoon. The women are in Court dress, the upper part of their bodies powdered with soft, yellow borèh, and their kaïns or sarongs coming under the armpits and knotted across their breasts. There is a glitter of diamonds, often in European setting—how much prettier is the more old-fashioned, though rather clumsier setting of jewels. Now and then a servant crouches behind the Soenan's chair and offers him what appears to be a handkerchief, or possibly a toothpick.

The Soenan speaks in a somewhat too jovial, loud voice. I find lacking in this very first Monarch of the Principalities the fine distinction which characterises all Javanese princes and aristocrats. But he is my host, and I must not enlarge upon this rather sore subject. He is said to be very good-natured, and so I must forget that, when I was introduced to him, he pointed at me and said, "So he is here ('ini') the brother of the ex-Resident of Djokdja, Couperus?" It was not exactly well-mannered, although it was strictly true. "He behaves in this strange manner quite often," someone—I must not say who—told me in confidence. He was spoiled in his youth and no one dared to thwart him. When, for instance, he used to turn on all the water-taps, he was allowed to have his way, because after all he was the Crown Prince.

No more about this, however, and I must not even expatiate on the Soenan's slipper, which slid from his big toe, for he allowed me to witness the wonderful performance of his "bedojos," and I will only tell you about them and no more about that spoiled child who is the Soenan.

The Soenan alone has the right to have nine bedojos, the Pangerans and princely relatives have seven. All nine of them—they are wives of the Soenan and princesses of royal blood—came through a side-door behind us one after another, very slowly, like moving flowers, and it was exceedingly graceful. Tropical flowers, flowers from

a Hindu country, blooming at a Hindu holy river. It is amazing to notice how many things in this country bear witness to a former, cultured civilisation, when everything was Buddhistic or Hindu. These little faces under their borèh-powder, which are never set in the stereotyped fashion of Western dancers, but always look serious, are like small, female Buddha faces under their antique Hindu diadems. One scarcely thinks of Javanese women and girls, which, after all, they are.

On the little diadems are the outstretched wings of a Garoeda-bird—the Vishnu bird, half human and half beast—a black veil hangs down at the back. The bosom, also powdered with borèh rises from a velvet bodice, and the train, batikked with a special pattern, is very long and trails after her. That train and the slendang—scarf—which is wound across the waist and arms, will play a great part in her dance. Her ear-rings glitter like dew-drops or flowers.

The Ratoe Alit, the Little Empress—daughter of the Soenan—a very vivacious princess, told my wife that this borèh powder was terrible to bear; a real torture. It closes up all the pores and prevents perspiration, so that the bedojos are not allowed to drink a drop on the day upon which they appear, and are subjected to a special diet. . . . There they are, in the pendopo, in front of the elevation upon which the Soenan, the Ratoe and their guests, have taken place. There is a prelude from the gamelan, the dalang beats time with his short hammer. They move forward very slowly. There seems to be one leader, in front of the eight others—all nine do the same thing at the same moment. How do they know, during all this long dance, what they have to do? They will never touch one another. Have these flower-like movements any meaning? One Pangeran says they have, the other says they have not. When you ask the Javanese for information of this sort you are always disappointed. You can never be certain—as if an atmosphere of mystery must be retained about everything which they do and even think. There is never complete sympathy.

The bedojos dance. But this is not dancing, it is a rhythmic movement, full of refined grace ; the rhythmic movements are accompanied by crystal-clear tones of the gamelan and the rhythmic beat of the dalang. And the train and the slendang always play a part. It is, as it were, a train and slendang dance. Every now and then they tap away the long thin train with their toes. Every now and then, the long, thin slendang is waved away with stiff, upturned finger-tips. There is a pause of half a second every time when the train is tapped and the slendang waved away. Crouching dressers are always busy arranging these little trains. It is exceedingly graceful, almost affected. When the nine bedojos tap and wave simultaneously it seems as if the wind were blowing through flowers and trees. And always these small, serious Buddha-faces, with their expression of tender piety. It is all too pure, too civilised. Nothing has been invented in either the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries more super-civilised than this. And these dances are age-old and traditional; they have sprung from what was once a holy dance and a rite.

Suddenly something strange occurs. Each of the bedojos has—we did not notice it—a pistol concealed in her girdle. And as they move they take the pistol in their hands and fire a shot of powder. . . .

It sounds like one shot.

And the Soenan is delighted.

" Did you hear that ? " he cries. " They shot at the same time."

Then they moved away, rhythmically, with slendang and train, their Buddha faces have not moved a muscle. There was not a single drop on either forehead or breast after this tiring dance, because of the borèh-powder. Placidly they swayed out of sight, but with what sweet melancholy and with what grace. They vanished slowly, through the side-door ; the thin train of the last was like a heavy, shuffling snake.

We rose. In a procession we went to see the Kraton, arm-in-arm. The merry Ratoe-Alit took my arm. We

all walked through the hall, where stood the symbolic bridal bed, in front of which the royal marriages take place. It seems curious to be passing that bridal bed as if it were just an ordinary piece of furniture. There were tall trees, lit up by electic lights, banyan or ficus trees, I believe, I could not distinguish which. There were little steps and bridges. You almost touched the illuminated branches as you walked among them. It was a strange, fantastic creation. You wrote your name in a visitors' book. The Ratoe-Alit told me all sorts of things and showed me the inner courts : there, crouched in the dusk, the serving-women dressed in Court dress, their sarongs drawn up under the armpits.

We saw the tower where the Soenan sometimes meets with the goddess of the Indian Ocean ; Njai Loro Kidoel, is her name. She sometimes warns him against disaster. Once, when he stumbled as he entered, she started and cried " Anâk " (child). Since that day the Soenan has looked upon her as his Mother—in former days, this goddess was the divine consort of the Soenan. The Ratoe-Alit told me all this ; later on the Resident confirmed it. Does the Soenan really believe that he sees his heavenly mother ? I do not know, but he is convinced that he can cause rain and make it disappear when the goddess of the Indian Ocean helps him. This does not appear to me to be purely Moslem. Are there after all more gods and goddesses near and around the one and only Allah ? These are traditions of a primeval past, dating from Hindu times.

After this interval, we take our seats once more. And we see the Wireng—a war-dance, performed by Raden Mas Soediro, one of the Soenan's younger sons. He is a schoolboy of sixteen, a football hero and . . . dances the Wireng with much grace. His opponent was, I believe, a cousin, who appeared as Monarch of Borneo and was, of course, beaten by the Soenan's son. He, youthful but of a sturdy build, the upper part of his body naked and powdered with borèh, with the Hindu Makontah—crown of heroes—about his temples,

wearing a long bunched kaïn and a coloured apron, which flapped behind him in two strips, defeated the treacherous Prince of Borneo, with not always very convincing sword play. Nevertheless he was exceedingly graceful, and the Soenan gave us his photograph.

"I can only give you one!" said the Soenan. "I must give each guest one!" Tjoema Satoe! (Only one). His finger was raised in the air. Good-natured, yes, but rather a peculiar manner and bearing. Yet how grateful I am to Toean Soenan (His Highness is addressed in this manner) for being allowed to see his bedojos and the young prince dance.

Our djaït (sewing-maid) had gone there with the Resident's soldier servant. She had seen it all from the garden.

"I grew 'cold about the heart,'" she said, very full of emotion, "when I was allowed to enter the holy Kraton. The soldier servant knew the pass-word." And the whole of Javanese reverence for the Kraton and for the Soenan trembled in her adoring voice.

XIV

We left Solo for Djokdja with a sense of great gratitude towards Mr. and Mrs. Harloff for their hospitality and for everything which they did for us inquisitive tourists. We were their last guests, as Mr. Harloff has now been made a member of the Indian Council and will move to Batavia. We motored past many sugar factories, and saw the turbulent Merapi against the horizon, its columns of black smoke mingling with the pure white clouds in a blue sky. The sugar crops rose gloriously from the fields ; tall sugar canes with long narrow leaves drooping gracefully, the sunlight dripping from each leaf in drops of liquid gold. But the machinery in the factory had been taken to pieces and there was nothing to be seen. It was not the right moment, either, for the coffee-plantations, which are scattered here and there ; the moment when the white flowering coffee-shrubs are in full bloom, beneath the shade of vivid scarlet flowering dadap-trees, a beautiful fairy-tale which lasts only two days, if my childhood's memories serve me right.

Many lovely sights depend during the monsoon in Java on the fleeting moment, on the short days and on the seasons. Nevertheless it is a good time to travel, for it never rains all day, and the showers are followed by blessed sunshine, and never on any of our motor tours were we troubled with dust. It was also always comparatively cool. During the East monsoon there would certainly have been dust and a dry scorching heat on the programme.

At Djokdja we were the guests of the Dutch East Indian Hotel Company in the Grand Hotel, and I have pleasure in recommending the Grand Hotel as being very clean and well managed. Although in some of the smaller places the hotels may be rather inferior, there are a number of good hotels in Java as well. But before long we were the guests of the Resident and Mrs. Jonquière, and residential hospitality is not to be despised by the tourist. A single word spoken perhaps at dinner may be of more use to the tourist, especially the one who wishes to publish his impressions, than a collection of printed guides, which as a matter of fact are not very numerous or perfect to these parts.

Mr. Jonquière received us with the pleasant courtesy which all heads of the provincial Government extended to the tourist-journalist in Sumatra and Java. Are these officials not very busy ? Would it not be pardonable if they set aside these duties of hospitality ? Is the charm of their high position, of their once so enviable post—they used to feel kings of their province—vanished now that new ideas are paving a way for themselves ? Here, perhaps, such a thing as " decentralisation," the taking away of the right of supervision from certain branches of the service—which were once created by the chief officials —may be a source of bitterness to the Residents. Their kingship is at an end : they are no longer enviable ; the charm of their high position has gone. It is not only because the sunshade—symbol of authority—has been taken away from them, an innovation which no true Javanese, with a love of primeval tradition, has ever been able to understand. It is not to be wondered at if they are bitter, these men to whom India owes so much.

It is not only because, with a salary of 1,500 to 1,800 guilders a month, they must live in a palace (in the Principality there is throne-room as well) ; their bitterness is chiefly caused by the fact that the men who, owing to strong personalities, were born to rule, have latterly been more or less pushed aside, with all their co-officials, assistant-residents and district-officers. But, are they

necessary if the Regents are being gradually emancipated and allowed to stand alone, the reformer asks ?

It is possibly because I am a son of a family of officials, the great-grandson of Abraham Couperus (Governor of Malacca), who could not help giving up Malacca to the English, but who retained Riouw for the Netherlands by means of a diplomatic move, that I sympathise with the silent grudge of our chief officials. Please do not think, however, that it was Mr. Jonquière who put this idea into my head. I am only generalising. I have noticed this bitterness in all the residents and officials whom I met. And I only mention it here because of the impression made on me by that immense Residency, with the inevitable throne-room, the house where at one time my brother was Resident, during the more glorious days of years ago. This Residence is so vast that the small son of the house lost his mother in it the other day and began to cry because he could not find her. Is it not rather like a fairy-tale ?

You should see such a house on a great day ; for instance, the Queen's birthday, when it is all lit up and decorated with plants and flowers. It comes into its own then. There should be a large retinue of servants in a house of this sort. The park, which is only half of what it was when my brother lived here, should be kept by a retinue of convicts : this is not considered " moral " now. In any case this park should be tended by four or five gardeners.

" It looks rather neglected," the Resident, who walks round with me, says apologetically. " But by the time I start on one place, another place will be full of weeds." . . .

Mediæval mud forts, citadels and castle walls, might give the situation of the Kraton at Djokdja more or less the aspect of a castle if everything were not so low, towerless, and styleless. Like the Kraton at Solo, this is insignificant and has no architectural beauty ; the wide complex of buildings makes or leaves absolutely no impression. All the Principalities' beauty and interest is hidden behind these walls ; the old parts of the town look very dilapidated in the morning light, but small

modern houses, which have become fashionable, are being built in the new quarters, for the increasing population.

When we visited the Kraton that morning I noticed particularly the Siti Tingil, literally, the "high earth," which made a deeper impression on me than the same place did at Solo. In front of the palace is a raised, covered pendopo, the roof rising very simply from iron or wood pillars. Here, on a consecrated spot, the Sultan is enthroned on festive occasions, next to him the Resident, who arm-in-arm, has led him to his seat, a seat exactly like that of the Resident himself. This consecrated spot is at other times enclosed in a sort of cage, to prevent anyone stepping on it. The inner roof of carved teak wood was very fine. The fenced-in elevation to the right serves as a seat for the Crown Prince at feasts; to the left is the place where the dignitaries with the crown jewels crouch.

In the subdued sunlight of the morning, this Kraton courtyard makes an almost mysterious impression. The Resident's ordinance-officer acts as my guide. He shows me the sacred banyan-trees—pruned into a round shape, surrounded by whitened palms in front of the Siti Tingil: if one branch of this holy tree breaks, a member of the Sultan's family dies. From out of the Siti Tingil, from the throne elevation, one has a fine view across the wide square, as from a Persian apadana or throne-room, and on festive occasions the entire densely-packed crowd can see the Sultan and the Resident sitting side by side.

It is the same at Solo. There are various quaint anecdotes on the subject of former Sultans and Soenans and former Residents. The Sunshades of the Monarch and the Resident were supposed to be of the same dimensions, but sometimes the Soenan, in secret, had his pajong made a little wider than was decreed; the Resident, if he happaned to hear of this touch, immediately ordered a new pajong, made the same size as that of the Soenan's. The seats of Monarch and Resident were supposed to be on the same line. But the Monarch sometimes pretended to

Bromo.

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be near-sighted and pulled his seat forward by the arms, so that his chair should stand outside the indicated line, consequently causing the Resident to be seated behind him, if only by a few centimeters. But the Resident would not tolerate this, and with the same gesture pulled his chair out, so that he once more came into line with his "son," for officially he was the Monarch's "father!"

Sometimes the Soenan would drop his handkerchief, apparently by accident, hoping that the Resident would pick it up for him, a thing which would humble him in the eyes of all the surrounding Javanese courtiers. But in this case the Resident would beckon one of the retinue and order him to pick up the Monarch's handkerchief. All these little ruses, however, are anecdotes of more than thirty years ago. The rulers in these days are much more loyal and are aware of the real support which the Residents give them.

We walked through the courts and gardens. "Regents" sat crouching here and there, in sentry-boxes; do not forget that in spite of their name they are merely ordnance officers and Chamberlains, always waiting in solemn state, and they must not be confused with the district Regents, who stand by the Resident's side, elsewhere. The guard was just being changed; the soldiers had old-fashioned muskets and swords, and antique spears; on the whole it was rather a pathetic defence force. I understood that there were eight standards and eighty soldiers.

We walked on; there was no splendour—later on we were to see much ancient magnificence—but it was pregnant with mystery. It was all so strange, so settled, so uncanny. One wonders what will become of it in the near future. A Prince—he seems to be an older brother of the Sultan, but the son of a concubine—is squatting in the middle of the garden, on the ground, with smoking utensils in front of him, a retinue behind him. He does not take any notice of the tourists who pass with their special permit, for it is not Friday, the day when the Kraton may be entered. He sits there motionless and

dreams. He does not move. He gazes into space : when we return an hour later he is sitting in the same place, in the same position. Now that I know who he is, I decide to greet him. He does not look up, and, pretending that he does not see me, he remains motionless in Eastern absorption and perhaps contempt for those who pass.

Here is the Court of Justice, with once more a sacred seat, covered by a cage, so that no unhallowed foot may tread there. This is the wall against which the condemned criminal is stabbed with a crease. In the meanwhile, several princes walk past us, their head-dress tight about the temples, one long point pulled out at the back, to one side. Slim silhouettes, with swaying hips, the crease stuck into the girdle, far back. Silent figures crouch everywhere, sometimes beside their mat and cushions, drinking their morning coffee. They have slept here ; have they no other apartments ? Why, otherwise, have they spent the night round about the Court of Justice ?

Naked children tumble about, an amulet dangling on their little stomachs. A motor, with servant and pajong, passes through a gateway ; it is the eldest sister of the Sultan, who has come to visit her brother. In the evening we shall make her acquaintance. She glances curiously at the strangers, then with her maid-servants she goes on. Piles of fruit are carried inside, in a glass palanquin ; it must be a present, a small tribute from I know not whom. It is an interesting sight, those bananas and mangos, and ramboetens ,gracefully piled in baskets, and carried in that glass palanquin. The fragrance of strong scent and flowers is wafted towards us, from whence I know not. . . .

I am glad to have had the opportunity of seeing the Kraton in the early morning, before we are allowed to pay our respects to the Sultan in the evening. We go on. There is so much which will be shown us. There crouching round their cards, dice, and cups of coffee, are ten or twelve old women, their sarongs knotted under their armpits ; they question our guides inquisitively :

" Who are they ? Have they a special permit ? It is not Friday, is it ? "

They are the harem attendants, who do not approve of our special permit. And they ask questions and cackle behind our backs, like dissatisfied parrots, as we go on. . . .

XV

We thread our way through sitting, squatting and walking courtiers to the reception-hall. The women look inquisitive, the men—the upper parts of their bodies naked, their short pigtails showing beneath cone-shaped caps, their trains flowing into a point—look utterly disdainful and indifferent. Do not imagine that there are walls. These court-spaces are always open. The inner room consists of carved teak-wood, covered with gold-leaf. The brooding stillness is only broken now and then by the dice-throwing of squatting satellites.

This is the actual Kraton : over there is the Gedong Koening—the Yellow House—where the Sultan lives close to the offices ; in an inner court some fighting-cocks and a hornbill languish in cages. And here is the dancing hall where undoubtedly the srimpis, the daughters of court regents, would have danced some night, were it not for deep mourning owing to the death of the old Sultan, Hamangkoe VII. " He who carries the universe in his lap." We notice the initials H.B.VII. everywhere, particularly on a great plate-glass screen—why a transparent screen ? . . . These splendours are sometimes illogical and not always in the best of taste. In this most sacred spot of the Kraton we are once again struck by the symbolic bridal bed, with its elaborate gilt carving. In gilded cupboards and shrines are the holy heirlooms, which as a special favour we shall be allowed to see that evening at the Resident's request.

There is an ever-burning lamp in front of the Bed and among the relics ; this sacred part of the Kraton is tended

by old women, no man is allowed to help them in their work ; at six o'clock in the morning they open the gates ; at six o'clock in the evening they close them. On festive occasions it is these women who hand the sacred weapons to those who have a right to carry them.

The throne-room is exactly opposite. In the inner roof there are beautiful gold caissons of carved wood covered with gold leaf ; the numerous narrow beams are like so many sunrays.

When a woman passes the sacred precincts of the Bed, the weapons and the invisible heirlooms, she makes the sign of the Semba, even at a distance, just as Catholics make the sign of the cross when they pass a Church. We are once more outside ; at the gates stands a sentry with an old-fashioned horn. What old weapons and old guns ! What an antiquated relic of a gradually declining power ! And probably also, what a hornet's nest of intrigue, especially among the women of all ranks. The reigning Sultan stayed in Holland for a long time in order to escape from these dangerous intrigues of Ratoes and concubines and their sons. What jealousy, envy, hatred and crime, and secret poisons mixed in the deepest seclusion, what secrets which will never be unveiled. . . .

That evening the Sultan receives us. He is still young, and how different from the Soenan ! The Sultan is a typical Oriental monarch, very aristocratic, with most courteous manners, placid and smiling. After the Resident has introduced me and we are all sitting in a wide circle—officials, Pangerans, tourists and our ladies—the Sultan apologises for the fact that he cannot allow his srimpis to dance or give us a performance on account of the mourning for his father. Consequently our reception is of a much more intimate nature. Refreshments are offered by servants who are elegantly dressed in correct Javanese style, although they did not crouch as they did twenty years ago. And although the Sultan does not speak Dutch very well and I don't know much Malay—I usually start off my sentence in miserable Malay and finish it in Dutch—he addresses me again and

again, asking me about my travels, especially about Sumatra, while I talk to him about Mengelberg.[1]

Then we rise. The poesakas (heirlooms) are displayed—those antique, sacred objects, gold vases, sirih-boxes, golden turkeys and dragons, garoedas—the birds of Vishnu—shields, spears with poisoned points, creases, lances. Each of these objects has a name, but I will not enumerate too many of them. All this Regalia is called Depàtjàrà or Kèpraton: the place where the Sultan receives us, his official reception-room in front of the sacred elevation of the Bed, is called Poerbàjèskà and one crease is called Kjahi Dwàperwàtà. These names are romantic, but you will have to be satisfied with their sonorous ring for I do not know what they mean. The Resident's "translateur" (why is this man not called interpreter or translator?) did not, alas, interpret them to me. As I write, some sonorous names of jewels with their translations are brought to me. Was anything ever more appropriate? Now I can tell you of a ring with an immense brilliant, called Temoengoe-Sidji—"He with one eye"—whilst smaller brilliant rings are named "Melati-buds." Many of these beautiful Boesaka-rings possess names such as "The glittering sea" and "The smile-rousing," and even when small, they are large according to our ideas.

There is a wonderful atmosphere about the Water-castle at Djokdja. It is like a fairy-tale of olden times, about Sultans and Princesses, at least if your imagination allows you to conjure up the ghosts of Javanese monarchs and monarch's daughters in this very neglected ruin. This neglect has certainly given a most picturesque appearance to the complex of towers, steps, ponds and stone apartments, where moss runs riot and the large leaves of caladia shoot up like tropical weeds in the rain-filled pools. Surely ghosts hover in these subterranean passages during the hours of dusk, ghosts of those who used to revel here in Eastern pomp and splendour,

[1] A famous Dutch orchestra conductor.

when these ponds and pools were full of pure water, when barques were moored here, when they bathed and swam, whilst flute and lute intermingled their tones and slaves and slave-girls lingered on the rocky banks. This was a pleasure-castle. Now it is but a national monument like the Boeroeboedoer. The gleaming stones are crumbling and no one pays any attention to the Water-castle excepting a few Javanese women, who bring their offerings of doepa (incense) and flowers to one or two sacred spots, for instance, to this curious sleeping-apartment, hewn entirely out of stone, with its heavy, carved screen-wall.

And so we have seen Djokdja and we leave the town with an ever-recurring sadness, one might almost say the sadness of travellers, which clings to the departure from each place of interest, whilst all the same they would not like to stay in it. And we leave the Principalities, that which is left of the great kingdom of Mataram. Perhaps, though it may not be much, there is something left of this former greatness. There is quite close the Boeroeboedoer, there are the temples of the Mendoet, of Prambanan, of the Tjandi-Sewoe, and then there is all this ancient civilisation. And the strange part of it all is this: if one supposes the building of the Boeroeboedoer to have started about 900 A.D. then it must not be forgotten that Hindu civilisation was only transferred to Eastern Java a quarter of a century later, although it would be rash to state that the building of the Boeroeboedoer took place during the short space of twenty-five years.

Yet if the chronology of the records tallies—the inscribed stones and copper plates are the only annals of these times—then a great political Eastward movement must have started during this time; then the kingdom of Kediri must have grown powerful during these years. With the exception of the stately temples which I have mentioned there is very little left of these historic times, of this Mataram Majesty, which tottered to the ground, or of the Kediri Majesty, which arose.

How the centuries, each with its own culture, wash

each other, like wave over wave, and how little is left of what millions of human souls have wrought during so many ages, of what all these souls have experienced and suffered. Just a single massive rock, like Boeroeboedoer, which withstood the tides, and a few other temples, which are like reefs and cliffs about this rock. And then nothing but a few inscribed stones and a few metal chronicles. Some names of kings and holy ascetics, to whom sanctuaries were erected; an occasional lingga (fallus-symbol) inscribed with almost illegible characters. Erlangga was in the year 1000 the great monarch who ruled from Kediri to the East, which is called Janggala. He paved the way for Kediri's supremacy. Kaneçwaza is the king who comes after him, and interests us because he is the Raden Pandji of the Pandji-Romances, from which the shadow-play which we saw performed was taken. But what else do we know about the primeval times of these lands, which are now dedicated to coffee and sugar, to culture and the greed of gain? Heroes and gods have fought here; legends still carry their names and deeds, from mountain peak to mountain peak, up and down these harmonious slopes which were modelled by torrents of lava.

I will no longer weary you with things and people of which we know so little. It is much more difficult to call up these ghosts in this atmosphere, than it is to call up the ancient ghosts of Hellas and Rome. Can it be because this nature, so colossal here, advances always with such tremendous force that the things which might still have been suspected less than a hundred years ago have now got lost, owing to violent earthquakes and fierce volcanic eruptions, under a mass of vegetation and leafy domes. It is now easier to understand that Athens and Rome have existed, than it is to believe that entire Mataram cities existed here, under their Stad-holders and Chancellors, whose names now scarcely ripple on the waves of legend.

And yet something of it all remains; this nation, with its long-haired men, the Middle Javanese. "Do

not marry a man with long hair, oh maidens." These are the words in which the women of East and West Java are warned against the men of the Principalities. Those of noble birth do not assimilate so easily as do the Sundanese and West Javanese. They do not learn to speak Dutch with such facility. They are too arrogant and cynical, and they consider themselves, however much they may have intermingled with other races, the descendants of the Matarams. They are Moslems now, outwardly, but there is a certain amount of the Hindu element about their religion which almost amounts to superstition. They feel themselves born aristocrats.

But I must contradict a saying which I have heard to the effect that " even the most humble Javanese coolie is an aristocrat." Though the high-born may have exquisite minds which are always a mystery to us, the people themselves are cast in a coarser mould, especially those of the Sunda islands. . . . The Central Javanese woman with her untidy knot of hair—always to one side—in her dark coat, cannot rival the Sundanese woman, who is attractively dressed and wears fragrant flowers in her shiny tresses. The Javanese woman trudges along the roads with her burden on her back ; all the other native women whom we saw, carried their burdens like queens, with swaying hips, heads erect, and almost without raising their hands. A certain self-complacency hovers in the air. I cannot help thinking that in these lands of walled kratons, which we are allowed to enter, in these lands of Soerakarta and Djokjokarta, a secret still exists and grows rampant within these souls and behind these walls, in spite of all the—possibly naïve—overtures we Westerners—unpopular rulers, especially here—have tried to make. We have never penetrated into the Javanese and the Central Javanese soul and it will remain a closed book to us, until the end.

XVI

WHAT is the Boeroeboedoer, this architectural mass, with its well-nigh black profile, which, when one approaches it, is outlined on the hill as a central point jutting out from among the coconut valleys. It is not a temple which one can enter, although without a doubt many of these Buddha images, here placed under striped, bell-shaped transparent cupolas—have always been worshipped. Many of them have bas-reliefs which depict the life of Buddha in stone carving. It happens nowadays still, because Hinduism remained indestructible, in spite of the apparently conquering Islam religion. The Boeroeboedoer, the Sanctuary of the thousands of Buddhas, might have been the holy shrine in which a Buddha relic —a part of the holy body of Buddha himself—might have been kept.

It is a supposition which will not leave you alone as you wander about these galleries, which tower ever higher. We do not know, and the charm of the unknown is great here. This immense structure is a secret. When you come nearer, as the morning merges into the clearer light of afternoon, this pile of buildings has become a dull grey instead of almost black, until it grows a lighter and lighter grey with here and there some parts even paler in the clear sunlight. Until sometimes by moonlight the imposing sanctuary grows white, ivory white, chalk white in its wide circle of palm groves, which extend to the horizon and the almost white night-sky, which has scarce a trace of blue.

The Bromo with Zandzee.

Bali dancers.

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Above four, many-cornered, uncovered, winding galleries, whose walls, barely man-high, depict scenes from Buddha's life, rise the three round terraces, upon which are the various domes And from the highest terrace the bell-shaped stupa, in which presumably the holy relic is kept, towers upwards to the sky, in the sunshine, in the wind, and in the moonlight. Nothing could be more exalted than this thought. Part of the mortal body of the man-god: be it his bones, a lock of hair possessing magic power, or a shred of clothing worn by him may be enclosed in this sacred shrine, placed in honour on the top of a mighty structure, which stands commanding against the distant blue-grey skies and greening horizon.

Monster lions mount guard, and through small pillared gates little narrow staircases lead upwards. Drain-pipes and spouts are hewn in the shape of misshapen animals, the bas-reliefs are framed in festoons of flowers. Spirals in thick arabesques fill in the spaces between the stone pictures, looking almost as if they were in high-relief. Flowers in vases are carved as resting-points in between the various sculptured scenes.

If you are not in too great a hurry, and move through the Eastern gate along the gallery walls with Oriental patience and pious devotion, the incarnation and the life of Buddha will be seen by you, and all the limited work of art may become inspired to your imagination, unfolding itself to wider and more ideal proportions. Here in this still, wind-kissed atmosphere, you can lose yourself and grow more spiritual in the abstract contemplation of the chiselled stone. The work of art becomes a reality. The Bodhisattwa—he who is to be Buddha in heaven—is aware of his mediator's task and tells gods and angels that he will become flesh and descend to earth. The holy celestial beings descend before him and teach the people the Vedas. The gods confer together about the earthly form which the Bodhisattwa shall assume. The deity shall recreate himself in many forms of humility, and for the last time the holy beings worship him in heaven. Here are his future parents, a king and queen. She, the

Queen Maya, dreams that she will bear a white elephant and, awaking, betakes herself in piety to the Acoka forest. Brahmins interpret her dream. She shall bear the king of the world. Her consort retires respectfully to a monastery.

Miracles happen. Lions take their places at the gates, a procession of elephants comes to render homage to the king, celestial beings descend from the clouds and the sky, the king and the queen worship each other ; then she bears the child. Radiant, it settles on a tall-stemmed lotus flower and takes seven steps towards each of the elements in all points of the compass. The gods pour him out water, for a bath.

Asita, a Brahmin, prophesies to the king that this son shall be the Buddha. The gods pay homage to him upon earth and give him royal palaces and treasures, but their radiance is outshone by the radiance of the child-body. As a boy he goes to his master, and the latter swoons in reverence whenever he sees his approach. He waxes wonderfully in Bodhisattwa knowledge, when he sits under the Bodhi-tree it does not turn its protecting shade away from him. . . . The pregnant legend unfolds itself. The sculpture is delicately executed and shows great maturity. It does not strike me as archaically naïve. It is occasionally very worldly, and it does not reflect any primitive beauty ; the ecstasies and adorations are more in the nature of laborious apotheosis. I can imagine that there were sculptors, predecessors, who depicted all these things with greater simplicity and piety. This art approaches worldly perfection, and when we grow tired of these soft, carnal things, we look up into the blue skies and into the green palm groves and feel that it is almost too mature.

The famous Buddha incarnations sometimes savour of theatrical decadence and the whole conception of the Boeroeboedoer, of a heavenly, hymn-chanting ecstasy. The details of the friezes drag one back to earth. Perhaps the material—the porous stone, is at fault here. Either it could not be made sufficiently spiritual or the

sculptor may have been too much of an artist and too little of a Brahmin.

It is perhaps a strange idea. How difficult, how presumptuous it is to judge what was wrought ages ago by artists who stood quite outside our modern soul. But who is master of the spontaneity of his impressions? While I criticise, I feel that my disenchantment is unfair and I look up and about me at the sky, the light, the landscape, and then it is as if I am given a clearer insight into this consecrated art, which pacified me as I stand on that solitary rock, jutting out into the Ocean of the Times, in which all this life of deep thoughts on celestial things was submerged. All the same, the different atavaras and reincarnations, among these scenes, are full of significance. The Bodhisattwa is represented as the son of Brahmin, and offers his body to a hungry tigress who cannot suckle her whelps. As the son of a monarch, he gives his eyes to a blind beggar, who turns out to be the god of Cakra, who rewards him.

His extraordinary charity is always the leading motif. He is born as the god Cakra himself. He is born as the king of the swans. He is born as a great ape, and rescues a lost soul in a forest from falling into a deep precipice; the rescued one, who is ungrateful and wishes to murder the Bodhisattwa is forgiven by him. He is born as a deer with a melodious voice, and preaches the truth at the courts. He is an elephant, he is a bull, he is a prince, an ascetic, he is a woodcutter, and delivers a lion from a bone which is sticking right into his jaw. But in the translucent, piled domes, which rise bell-shaped from the terraces, sits—or sat—the Musing Buddha. Here he is the historic Cakyamuni, or one of the five Dhyani-Buddhas, who are differentiated according to the "Mudras" (the attitude of both hands).

As Ruler of the Zenith he raises his left hand to his breast and emphasises with his thumb and forefinger the argument in his preaching; as Ruler of the East, his left hand lies open on the knee, whilst the right hand hangs back upwards from the knee; with this gesture Buddha

touched the earth, calling it as witness to his godliness. As Ruler of the South, the left hand lies palm upwards in the lap, the right across the knee in the same attitude. This is the Mûdra of Charity. In his rule of the West Buddha's hands lie across each other, backs downwards, in his lap, the tips of the thumbs just touching one another.

This is the Dhyana-Mûdra, who is wrapped in thought under the motionless spreading Bodhi-tree. Ruling the North, the Buddha places the left hand in his lap, palm upwards ; he raises the right to his breast as a sign of fearlessness, the round head is always kept in lofty repose, the skull fashioned in the shape of a globe and the " urva," the astral projection, like a round jewel or pearl on the forehead, the lobes of the ears are very long, the hair, in thick curls, is short, the monk's cowl in noble folds is open at the neck and falls in crinkly pleats along the knees and over the feet.

What remains of these images in these stupas or niches is more calculated to stimulate our devotional attention than is the elaborate refinement of the bas-relief. It is as if they are simpler, grander and more inspired, now that the artist was no longer required to follow the agile legend on foot, but could devote himself wholly to the plastic rendering of lofty, sublime, restful, universe-embracing ideas. It is a miracle of beauty to see the musing Buddha, with crossed legs, knees apart and hands in the mûdra of thought, in that high exalted corner, above the frieze, the five stupas, crowning the finely-notched recess like a diadem. We come upon this image suddenly and our progress there, though we are only tourists, is as an adoration.

Beside this Rock of Ages, which is the Boeroeboedoer are the shrines of the Mendoet, Prambanan, Tjandi-Sewoe, these magnificent reefs, to which Hinduism and Buddhism clung during the storms of time. Perhaps the Mendoet temple in its succinctness is the most lovely thing which remains of this religion and ultra-civilisation. The three images of the Trimoerti—the Trinity of Brahma,

Vishnu and Siva[1]—who rise up separately in this comparatively small space, where incense is still offered as if Mahommed had never spoken of one God. Under the typical Hindu, pyramid-like roof, they rise in alarming grandeur before your astonished gaze. Inasmuch as a human sculptor could ever give an expression of divinity to a towering mass of stones on which he worked devoutly with his chisel, this perfection has almost been attained in the case of these colossi, which stand enthroned, almost as white as marble, in that mysterious dusk of the pyramidal sanctuary. Siva the Matadewa, the "Great God," Vishnu, the rider of the sable-beast Gatuda, the sun-hawk, and between the two Brahma the Creator of the Universe. You can hardly tear yourself away from the overwhelming beauty of these suddenly-revealed, celestially beautiful Titans.

In the Prambanan temples, which are being restored—I am not much interested in restoration, but very much so in the care and preservation of what is left—it seems to me the art is still more refined than it is in the Boeroeboedoer. This complex of splendid, harmonious shrines, in which the "great gods" are seated in lofty temples, makes an almost rococo impression on me. The Tandi-Sewoe, like a city of temples whose gates are guarded by naked Raksakas, with ugly, sneering faces, looked, if anything, more homely and full of pathos, chiefly because of the seated, musing Buddha against the dark grey sky, the Buddha over whom there was no stupa and to whom no spreading Bodhi-tree offered the protection of its still shade. With clouds and distant undulating hills behind his motionless head, he sat there in the reverie which had lasted for ages, like the impersonation of a passing mood, like the materialisation of a holy dream, never moving from that spot in spite of the burning suns and floods of rain which passed over that holy head, leaving it undisturbed for years, for centuries perhaps.

[1] Or possibly Buddha between Avalokiteçara and Manguri.

XVII

A TOURIST would not be doing his duty, if he did not see the East side of Java.

There are in Java two large towns which rival Batavia in importance. There is Samarang, but the tourist could quite well leave out Samarang, although he would miss the very fine hill district where modern villas have risen within sight of the sea. Soerabaia, a large town in the East of Java, must not be left out, however, as it is the starting point for several most interesting excursions. It is almost a pity that Soerabaia is so unavoidable, for it is, in spite of its vastness and the fact of being a business centre, a town which to the tourist seems insignificant and dirty ; the neglect of public buildings and parks—at least of what are called parks here—of the roads, the neglect of everything, the lack of all charm and line, of all cleanliness especially, makes the tourist wonder whether it is really the Dutchman, so famous for his cleanliness, who rules and lives in Soerabaia. Dilapidated Weltevreden is neat and clean in comparison with this large, noisy town, whose greatness lacks all grandeur and whose dirt lacks all picturesqueness. Everything and everyone pushes and motors through the traffic to the Roode Brug (Red Bridge), obsessed with the idea of earning money very quickly, so as to get away ; above this traffic the gloomy bell booms " Depression " into the ear of the pale-faced business man.

I must not waste too many words on Soerabaia and only remember gratefully the hospitality I received from Mr. and Mrs. Cohen in the Residency, in whose palatial

Batta girls at a sacrificial feast.

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vastness it was a relief to be able to forget the disagreeable atmosphere outside. From Soerabaia, we went to Tosari, but it is not pleasant during this rainy season to go so high up into the hills. I spent a few days among rain and clouds, as the guest of the Dutch East India Hotel Company, who cannot be blamed for the fact that it rained. I am convinced that the hotels at Tosari and at Nongkodjadjar, during the warm dry months of the East Monsoon, offer fresh hill air and fine views to overworked money-seekers and business-men.

Nevertheless I was glad to see Tosari again, although Old-Tosari, where I stayed more than twenty years ago, was burned down. I was glad to see Smeroe and the smoke-belching Brômô in the East, and in the West the Ardjoen, wrapped in legend. Henri Borel wrote about these hills with so much feeling and inspiration that I gladly say to him: "You were the bard of these lofty Titans, and why should I try to tune my ode to a higher pitch, than you tuned your chant in many pages of prose, which will go on living as long as our Dutch books live." I thought of Borel as I saw Ardjoen arising in the mist-dispersing sunrays, like the young hero and king's son, after whom it is called Ardjoen, whom the love-sick nymphs surrounded as he went out to fight the wicked demons. Fight always, thou great Sun surrounded by the heroes' song, against the evil forces which will ever frustrate thee, the evil forces which loom, like grey devils on black wings, as has been said in thy epics ages ago, by mighty poets, whom we, Epigoni, can only feel, in order to weep over our own feebleness.

Zandzee, behind Batoek and Brômô and Smeroe's silhouettes, thou who hast been compared to a desert, art to me in no way like a desert, since I saw the African one! But Zandzee, thou art indeed an immense burnt-out crater, from whose giant funnel arise those other volcanoes, which show me a reflection of what creation was in primeval times. I did not seek thee this time because I can remember going into thee twenty years ago as if it had been yesterday.

Up the steep Moengal Pass, bent over the pony which I embraced, I saw thee suddenly before my eyes, embodying my fancies, visible, almost tangible, making me realise that this " desert " was a crater. Landscape of cataclysm that open crater lay there, like a valley of Jehoshaphat, like a valley of Death, of the Judgment Day : vision and nightmare wert thou, Gehenna, why should I wish to see thee again ? Thou wouldst most certainly have faded to my wearier imagination after so many years ; I would have grieved at finding thee faded and full of disenchantment. I will only write of thee from a memory which has remained supremely grand. Thou wert one of the most awe-inspiring of this world's landscapes which I had ever seen ; thou wert, as it were, chaos, out of which a new order arises in the shape of those new but also age-old hills : the grooves which dented Batoek from crest to base made me think of some divine, mysterious forging. The grumbling of smoke-belching Brômô made me think of a subterranean workshop for Javanese fire-gods and Cyclops, and seeing thee I could dream of the new building of a divine hill-city, after the destruction of a divine hill-kingdom, and I could dream all this again at nights, as I slept.

Why should I wish to see thee again ? What could I have felt about thee ? What words could I have given for my new impressions of thee ?

The words which I have spoken, and which interpret my enthusiasm of so many years ago, are the only ones I will dedicate to thee. I do not desire new impressions : feebler words would cause me too great sadness, because of that which would not now impress me so much.

But apart from being the starting-point to this realm of hills, Soerabaia is also the starting-point to what remains of the kingdom of Môdjôpâhit, and to the tourist, who usually seeks the Past—however little there may be—beneath the ever-increasing upper layer of the Present, this sunken kingdom is always of historic and poetic interest.

There is very little left of Môdjôpâhit, the great Hindu

Kingdom, which in East Java grew with a fabulous power. What do we know of it ? Just what our learned men have deciphered from a few copper plates and inscribed stones can tell us. Some names of monarchs, who were at war with one another : a few data and the conclusions which one can draw. But what is historical ? Dry facts—certainly. To write the history of them must be the work of a more or less reckless poet, who sees past visions and recalls them. Set your mind at rest, reader. I shall not be that historian. The vision was too vague and too fleeting, and I can only show you a few ruins in the small museum of Môdjôkerto. This is all that remains to us of the kingdom of might and greatness, Môdjôpâhit ! And perhaps the rest fled from the intrepid preachers of Islam to Bali, where perhaps we may find some of it. . . .

The Regent of Môdjôkerto, who speaks Dutch, is kind enough to act as my guide to the Museum, which is situated in the courtyard of the Regent's house. He is called Raden Temenggoeng Kromo Adi Negore, and tells me about his father, Raden Adipati Ario Kromo Djajo Adi Negore, a former Regent here, who might have been the poet of whom I spoke if only he had been more reckless. But the old Regent was a man of science, with all his love of the Môdjôpâhit past. He investigated and had excavations made ; it was owing to him that the water reservoirs of Tjandi-Tikoes arose out of the earth : he found various Hinduistic images and stone furniture : he found an antique gamelan-game ; they were covered with layers of earth, mud and vegetable-mould, one on top of the other. The objects which we see now are often Asiatic-barbarian, in the sense that it is difficult to understand that these works of art are of a much later date than the sculpture of Boeroeboedoer, Prambanan and Mendoet. In any case there was no development in the course of three or four centuries ; the artists appear to have reached their limit.

It is thought that Môdjôpâhit was founded in 1292 by Raden Wijaya, son-in-law of Karta Negore, King of East Java. He is the first monarch of Môdjôpâhit and

calls himself Kartârajasa Jayawardahana. His portrait is in the Museum at Batavia, four-armed, like Siva, the great god. His picture certainly forms a link with the perfection of Prambanan and Boeroeboedoer. There is Raksasa also, a demoniac temple-guard, who is still worshipped at Môdjôkerto, and to whom pregnant women bring offerings. But where is the sculpture of higher ideals ?

Perhaps this is Vishnu, mounted on Garoeda. Vishnu, the supporter of the all-created, in ten atavara's—reincarnations—worshipped by his followers, and unity of the Trimurti. His hand rests in the Buddhistic pose of the Dhyana-müdra on the monstrous head of the man-eagle or sunbird. His two other arms, however, raised from the shoulder, two attributes, the horn and discus. There is something very feeble about this Vishnu head. It is like a weak Buddha. Have we had a glimpse of a still brilliant period of decline ? I do not know how far away from us is this art. What a much deeper understanding we have of a Hermes, of a Praxiteles, a Dionysius, an Aphrodite. . . .

When the gateway of the new kraton, which the last king of Môdjôpâhit built for his son and successor, was nearing completion, the kingdom was stormed by the New Thought and by the armies of Islam. . . .

But the Regent maintains with a smile that the tradition that Islam is supposed to have conquered Môdjôpâhit—is not historic. . . . But then, when is tradition ever true to history ? And the king who fled cursed all those who should dare to pass through the unfinished gateway. No Javanese risked it. . . . I do not believe that there is anything left of this gateway. Or can it perchance be this crumbling arch ? However that may be, I am not going to pass under it ; I will not incur the wrath of the king, who fled. Is this really all that is left of Môdjôpâhit ? Only this colossal waterwork ? Was it a pleasure resort ? Was it a reservoir ? The steps are harmonious in outline, harmonious also is the monumental structure of this monumental pile of massive pillars—

one rises higher than the rest, which have collapsed ; is it a king's bath ? Are these ponds round about it princesses' baths ? Or was this only the water-tower, which provided the city with water ? Ornamental monster gargoyle heads serve as drain-pipes ? We do not know anything. This is excavated and worshipped by the present-day Javanese.

" There is so much Hindu still in our blood," the Regent confesses to me. It is worshipped by the tourist, and that is all ! No, not all. In the Museum I am struck by the age-old excavated gamelan cymbals and vases and plates which were found here, covered with rust. They were cleaned and the copper-plates have been placed on a new wooden shelf. Their tones are soft and tender, as it were coming from a great distance. From out of the Past . . . there is no doubt about it. These tones are the same which sounded centuries ago, with the festal chant of Môdjôpâhit. This music, now almost astral, probably was heard, with an almost similar elusive melody when in those last years of the kingdom the new kraton was founded. The new gateway was built when already, Islam armies loomed up on the horizon. . . .

" No, no," says the Regent, smiling. " I do not believe that Islam conquered in any but a peaceful way." I do not know, but the sounds of these, as it were, Past re-echoing, gamelan-plates were to me . . . that which was left of Môdjôpâhit, the submerged Hindu Kingdom, of pomp and splendour.

XVIII

Grissee, which at the time of the Dutch East India Company was already an important harbour town in East Java, is now a tumble-down place which has nevertheless one great point of interest for the tourist, namely, a cemetery where a few of the seven Walis or prophets, preachers of Islam, lie buried. And as I have no historical information to the contrary I must accept, in spite of much contradiction from Javanese quarters, that the New Thought came with the banner of the prophet from the West—Arabia—to the far East, causing the downfall of mighty Môdjôpâhit. The history of Java, it has been said, is one continuous epic, and this epic we find till late in the history of the Company; after that the epic becomes more modern and the heroic elements are replaced by a more psychic current of events: the young European power, which diplomatically—even our first sea fathers were by no means without diplomacy[1]—crumbled on the mouldered bulwarks of the great Javanese civilisation.

Has Islam conquered altogether? Superficially one might say that it has, but deeper down there is something which remains mysteriously Hindu, especially in the Central Javanese and in the East Javanese mind. In Bali we see that Siva-ism is still alive, as it were, in a

[1] When Cornelius Houtman, 23rd June, 1596, appeared in the road of Bantam, he signed a treaty, on August 1, with the King of Bantam, which sealed the friendship with Prince Maurits and allows free trade. On July 14, he was given a house, a warehouse. Portuguese intrigue, however, undermined this ideal beginning.

suddenly different world. Islam brought a religion without art, a religion of the mind alone with as final reward, after this fate-ridden life, a paradise for the senses. Hinduism brought a religion of art, of beautiful shrines and sculpture with as the apotheosis of many atavaras the sanctity attained and absolute bliss of Nirvana, in which everything is understood and all sensuality is merged in the soul of souls. Was the supplanted religion not a more beautiful, a more exalted one? Possibly one has to accept the fact that Hindu ideals had relaxed and become colourless owing to over-culture and super-civilisation—even without motor-cars, aeroplanes and wireless telegraphy, super-civilisation has been known in the history of the world—and that the prophets of the New Thought, the Walis of Islam, were powerful fanatics—ecstatic but enormously powerful, gigantic pioneers.

There lies in Central Java, the Djieng tableland with ruins and shrines and lofty flights of steps, hewn out of stone, leading up to those shrines. There was an age-old pilgrimage, to we do not know exactly what Hindu and Buddhist relics. But since the first Soerat of the Koran had been pronounced by the fanatic mouths and thundering voices of the first Walis: ("There is only one God . . .") the pilgrimages do not appear to have propelled so many thousands of feet up these wonderful steps. It was like Protestantism declaring war on Cathocism, and because Islam was powerful with all the power of ecstasy and fanaticism, and the Buddhist ideas hung like withered lotus-flowers on drooping stalks, Hinduism could but conquer.

Here in the cemetery of Grissee are the holy graves of Hadji Poerwa, of Malik Ibrahim and Magfoer. They are like all the sepulchres on this sacred spot, yellow and green with velvet moss and very beautiful. The upright stones are engraved with eulogistic inscriptions, these at the head of the graves are of a stone caligraphy, which is presumably still Môdjôpâhit and not inspired by Islam art. You will also notice in this cemetery a lovely urn of harmonious shape, the inscription upon which

assures you that: "This urn is an excellent work." The stone urn, made out of a large monolith, was the pride of the sculptor, a pride which the Islamite conqueror would never know. For what is there which speaks of Islamite art? In which ancient medsjit-messigit place of worship is there any art-thought left? Not even a single arabesque or hieroglyphic. Art has vanished, been banished, has fled—was perhaps found to be sinful—and not before we reach Bali shall we find that some of it has survived, of course in Hinduistic style.

It is a sign that Môdjôpâhit was not immediately conquered by Islam, that at the time of its last Màhàràjas, (Great Kings, Emperors), the Walis—prophets, priest-monarchs—were at Ngampel and Grissee. However the downfall of the great kingdom may have come about, the last impulse to its collapse was probably given by those fanatic, powerful priest-monarchs with an awe-inspiring gleam in their dark, glowering eyes, and a commanding gesture of their withered, sinewy hands.

We know little of all this. I merely offer what I have said as day-dreams winged with history, musings which fill my mind as I wander amongst these graves and grave-stones.

Entire families of Regents lie buried here. We were particularly struck by the fact that the Arabs who are with us—the Lieutenant-Arab accompanies us—do not show any reverence towards the graves of the first Walis; they have taken their religious ideas from a different sect, yet their lack of devotion seems to us strange.

The Regent of Grissee accompanies us to the famous grave of Soenan Giri, near Ngampel. Climbing the high hill steps, we enter this very holy grave-temple. In the grave monument itself, on carved gilt wood, rests he who was named Raden Pakoe, a holy prophet and champion. Two creases were forged of his lance; one of these creases, I believe, disappeared. It is a great honour that we are allowed to see this crease. Crouching, with many sembas, he unlocks the grave gates and produces the crease from a case, holds it, praying, against his forehead and shows us

the holy weapon, shows us also the document, signed by an official, which assures us how this crease was stolen and brought back again. The crease itself did not strike us as a remarkable weapon, but it was the crease which had been forged out of the lance of Soenan Giri.

The sacred cemetery of Grissee, with the golden, striped shade of palm leaves spreading over moss-grown graves, only destroyed by time, and for this reason not repaired—for Time must be revered, according to Moslem tradition—was, as well as the Giri-hill, very striking in colour and atmosphere. It was full of real poetry. We roamed about and admired and I felt comforted for the fact that we know so little of these last days of Môdjôpâhit and the first of Islam. Much has been written about Java, but we still do not possess a finely-drawn picture of the history of these epic lands, and it seems to me that the poet-historian of our times could find a good deal to do. A poet should be able to look upon Java from a historic point of view, if he wishes to bring it nearer to the souls of those who are only interested in it when they see a chance to make a fortune. Among Java's princes there are poets who speak and write Dutch like Netherlanders. Why should not one of these be inspired to write a historic poem about the land of his fathers, which always remains a mystery to us ?

There has been original research, and it might be perfected, but where is Inspiration ?

I have completed my travels through Java. Tomorrow we leave for Bali, which is so different to the Mother island. I have seen and revisited many beautiful spots, and the memories of other days were like a treasure-trove which I unlocked and which sometimes made me marvel, as here and there, I thought to see a long-lost jewel gleam amongst its riches.

But all this was for myself. Reading over these sketches, it seems to me that I have only given a tourist's impression, which should not be deprived of sentiment. I do not believe that more than a causerie was expected of me. There are " Guides "—not many ; there are

scientific works, never too many; and we who are not learned are always grateful to those who are, and one day . . . Inspiration will come!

As a tourist, I have written for future tourists. I have not attempted more. Are Sumatra and Java countries for tourists? It all depends. The tourist who comes here must not demand too many of the things which in Europe and elsewhere he has learned to appreciate and expect as—comforts. If, pausing for a moment at our materialistic scales, we weigh cost and comfort against one another, then the tourist with means—and who will venture here without means?—will put his tongue in his cheek.

At Bandoeng there are the "East India Travel Tourist Offices," and the General Manager is Mr. J. Wennips, who, owing to his energy and love of work, will certainly accomplish a good deal. (He was asked to come to Singapore in the spring of '22 to arrange the reception for the Prince of Wales.) But he must not labour under the delusion that there is not a great deal to be done still from a tourist's point of view in this country. Excepting the hotels which I had occasion to praise, the accommodation in most pasangrahans and official rest-houses is bad. On the other hand, our old hospitality still stands as a firm tradition. And I must here again express my warmest thanks to the Residents and their wives for their hospitality. They always gave me any help and information for which I asked, and if in intimate conversation they sometimes let themselves go with someone who was neither an official nor a planter, well, then they always knew quite well that whatever was not meant for the Press would not get into the Press. At least I hope I have remained discreet.

But I am forgetting about my tourist, for whom I write. I want to tell him that there are three plagues in the Dutch Indies. The first plague is the much-dreaded sickness—but a Westerner who lives a hygienic life is, even without inoculation, immune from this. The second plague is—the Scornful Press. If the tourist is

someone who is more or less well-known—famous, or notorious—he will most certainly be attacked by this plague. It is inevitable. "But," someone tried to comfort me, "you share this with all distinguished people who come to Java: consider all these abusive articles which the editors of many Indian papers have thrown at you as a compliment."

The third plague, oh tourist? The climate. It is your sworn foe. Take care, take very great care! The climate is a much worse plague than the Plague or the Scornful Press; as to the first, I did not have it, as to the second, I marched past it triumphantly, but the third, I felt, was lowering my vitality every day. Brace yourself up, tourist, against this climate!

XIX

We are on board the *Both* (K.P.M.—Koninklÿke Paketvaart Maatshappy). The scarcely-rippling sea is absolutely serene. I try to write at a card-table on deck. It is afternoon. In a wonderfully subdued light which merges into soft white and grey clouds, the hills on either side of us fade away. . . . Quiet, quiet. There are many pigs on board. They lie tied up in transparent bamboo baskets. Now and then a rather unpleasant smell is wafted towards the after deck. But they are quiet ; quietly they go to meet their fate.

Quiet, quiet. The landscape of palm trees and bamboo huts is in this light, in this stillness, rather like an old-world picture : it makes one think of Paul and Virginia. But such comparisons are not allowed. I do not want to think of anything but Bali, for we are on our way from Bali, where for a week we have seen amazingly beautiful sights, sights in which the tourist revels.

After Soerabaia, a dirty town full of pretentiousness and lust for money, Bali is an idyll. A strange Oriental idyll, wonderful in line and colour. We must not compare it to other idylls, to Theocritus or Virgil. Bali is itself. Bali is Bali and nothing else. After the muddle at Soerabaia, this sea, these palms, these many Poera temples, these handsome, picturesque people, these Buddhists, and the too-ornate style of their sanctuaries, disappointed me. I had heard too much of the Bali architecture and sculpture. The split gates—pointed but knotted at the split—of the temple-courts are pretty ; but the sculpture with which gates and tabernacles are

overloaded always has the same nightmare faces and demoniac monsters.

One cannot really use the word temple; they are temple-courts in which there are open shrines and little holy houses. Sometimes there is a gilt chair inside this shrine or holy house. Here the invisible astral being of the godhead alights on special days and hours. To this astral being is offered the scent of flowers and fruit. It is performed by richly-decorated women, occasionally by a priest or pedenda. These offerings are fine and rather touching. I will describe them later and try to give you an idea of their soft radiance and piety.

Along the roads, along the sawahs, past the poeras, and along the dessas—where little craters with low-roofed houses nestle behind mud walls—the people move and walk for miles, the women carrying their burdens, the naked shepherd-boys, with hats of palm leaves, driving beautiful, smooth-haired, soft-eyed cows. Wherever one looks there is ever-changing beauty. I will not tell you yet of these colours and lines, but when I do they will always remain an idyll. Modern life has scarcely touched it at all. It is almost entirely unadulterated and has remained as it was in ancient days. Not Greek or Roman, but Asiatic, just as ancient as the other two. He who loves ancient things in Oriental surroundings can see them for himself in Bali.

This consoled me for the disappointment of not finding the actual architecture and sculpture as fine there as I had thought it would be. I missed in this Hindu art always the elevating, revealing figure of Buddha. It is wonderful to think that this inexpressible godhead alights in the tabernacles, and, invisible, feeds himself on scent and aroma. But because of this, the sculpture remains a concrete nightmare of angry giants with tusks and infernal demons of revenge. The gentle part of this religion is in the idea of the invisible godhead and in the charming ceremonies which the women perform; the cruel and art-destroying part is the ever-recurring motif of angry giants and demons of revenge.

The artist throughout the ages has always excelled in portraying the celestial rather than the infernal ; the angels of Fra Angelico are beings of a paradise in which we believe : his devils always remain grotesque and unreal.

Yet in Bali the numerous sanctuaries along the road and in the dessas, under high palms and in the shadows of the giant banyan trees, look attractive because of the time-worn colour and moss-grown stone. Banyans are the patriarchs and anchorites among trees ; they stretch their leafy crowns towards heaven, but frequently their branch-roots drop to the earth, seeking worldly things.

In '17 during the earthquake many of these poeras partially collapsed. They have been repaired, and this is the living part of this not very fine art. At the instigation of the architect Mooyen they are being rebuilt, and I have seen Brahmin sculptors at work carving this parasstone with hammer and chisel as if it were a labour of love, and I believe they followed the ancient design of leaf and arabesque and demons unconsciously, honouring thus the ever invisible gods. These Brahmins are not paid in money for their work. As they worked they were thinking of Mahabarata and Ramayana, and were perhaps going through the ancient epic.

If this Hindu architecture, of which the split gateway is the most characteristic feature, is multi-coloured, the crude yellows and blues are at first very ugly, but soon the damp makes them fade to softness, and the moss runs riot over all.

The plates and saucers worked into the sanctuary walls look very curious ; sometimes there is a crystal bowl on the roof. Were sacrifices offered on these plates ? The valuable dishes—there were some Delft ones—have disappeared, and most of the plates and saucers have been broken.

It is all very untidy and badly kept. They rebuild, but never look after a thing. The Oriental creates, but very rarely surrounds his creation with care. When he has finished his work he expects the gods to do the rest.

At Singaradja we are the guests of the Resident, who acts as our guide. Here is the funeral pyre upon which the bodies were laid. Here are the holy trees on which Yama, the monarch of the underworld, impaled and tortured souls.

And on these bas-reliefs and the friezes painted on linen and also in the open council-house of the market—where the golden thrones of the rulers can be seen—the various tortures of hell are revealed.

When the deceased has no money for his burial—the death banquet offered to the people is expensive—he is burned first ; his ashes will be scattered in the sea, and will be carried on the breakers back to the land and from the land back again to the deep waters. The ashes mingle with sea and land, with water and earth ; the body returns to its source.

A curious mood came over me in the Poera Pondok-Batoe, the temple which lies on land beside the sea, the murmuring sea down below with its foaming breakers. It was a late, grey afternoon. The reefs in the sea resembled the architecture of the gateway and temple ; the same ornate style. A stone staircase led to the temple courtyard, where dark trees stood. In front of an old image—it is very seldom that one finds such a Buddha-like, possibly Hinduistic, image in these places—lay a recent sacrifice : a large, squarely-folded banana-leaf, in which were flowers, tobacco, a sirih leaf and some white chalk among several unfolding combodja flowers. . . . Down below was the murmur of the sea ; otherwise everything was still. . . .

Quite suddenly I realise how entirely different this atmosphere is to everything I have seen in Java and Sumatra. . . . In no way can it be compared to anything on these large Sunda islands. It is quite unique, with something of Môdjôpâhit about it, as if those who came here from East Java, with the Moslems in pursuit, had taken with them something intangible which can scarcely be expressed, mixed with the sweet melancholy of things which have been.

It hung there under the shadow of the large, still leaves, mingling with the song of the white breakers rising and falling among the rocks, whose tortured forms seemed to have served as a pattern to the builders, who had followed the tradition of their sanctuaries in the country which they had left.

Such a mood gives some consolation for the disappointment which I have mentioned, and, when one has got over this disappointment, Bali is attractive because of much which is beautiful and interesting.

There were so many unexpected scenes which remind one of pictures of ancient Asia. For instance, that evening we saw walking along the road some women, the upper part of the body naked; on their heads they carried their baskets with sacrifices, scarcely touching them with their fingers. There were many dozens, one after another, with swaying hips and arms and swelling bosoms, the basket always well balanced like an immense coronet on their heads. Flowers and fruit were arranged most carefully in these baskets. First bananas, like a pointed diadem, then, above these, other fruit, piled high. Where were they going? To a temple close by.

It had rained that day; dusk was falling. Dogs lurked at the temple door, a pig sniffed about in the mud. That pig was of the earth, the dogs also. The ugly gladak dogs are most horrible, the worst-tempered type of dog which I have ever come across. But those proud, devout women, rising from out of the mud to the temple-steps, looked like walking caryatides. Inside the temple courtyard was a single priest, the pedandja, the only man. And the women placed their baskets on the sacramental table in front of the empty tabernacles or pillars; here were enthroned the astral deities, feeding themselves on the aroma of the fruit and the fragrance of strongly-scented flowers.

And there was once more that atmosphere which belongs to Ancient Asia. Nowhere in Sumatra and nowhere in Java is there so much piety about the women's offerings to the gods in the temples. Only in

Preparations for corpse-burning (Bali).

The Lake of Batoer (Bali).

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Bali is there such a deep piety. The men just walk about with their fighting-cocks, fondling them in their arms, but the women and the children are devout ; they bring offerings and pray. . . .

This scene in the twilight, amidst all the mud, was very touching ; from the distance came the sound of barking dogs, who had been driven away ; the pig alone remained, sniffing round.

After a pleasant stay of three days with the Resident we started off again. We motored for five days, and it was Mr. Minas—remember his name well, reader !—who acted as our chauffeur and guide to the island during these days. We went from the North—Singaradja—to the South, which is a most picturesque part of Bali ; then to the West : Karang-Assem and the notorious Mount Batoer. It is strange how the whole East of Bali is barren, uninhabited, soulless and insignificant, whilst all the populace, animation and significance is concentrated in the luxuriant South and in the more sober West.

Mr. Minas, besides being a butcher and cinema-proprietor also manages his own motor business and acts as guide. He possesses all the admirable qualities of his Armenian race, so turn to him with complete confidence should you be travelling in Bali !

XX

EARLY in the morning we went past the Poera of Sangsit to the bathing-place, Tedja-Koela. It is curious to find this seaside resort which probably dates from the time of Môdjôpâhit. There are niches in which the men, and niches in which the women, bathe and swim. To one side is the bathing-place for horses and buffaloes. The niches, gateways and walls are carved.

This country is absolutely different from Java. Often there are long, shady roads along the native villages, but while in Java they are fully visible, a picturesque medley of bamboo-houses and sun-baked coconut groves, in Bali they are like kratons by the roadside, for the villages are separated by long, low walls—dried mud—covered with white or green paint, with artistic borders and corner designs drawn on them. Each village has its poera or sanctuary, which can be seen over the wall with the tabernacles of the gods, open, and always empty little shrines—until at the sacrificial feast the astral beings ascend, in the imagination—and the pagodas, sometimes seven, sometimes nine-roofed, which arise at one side. These walls give a touching sense of privacy to life in Bali. Nevertheless every day, every hour, there is a constant stream of people going market-wards—along the roads and past the walls ; there is always a market somewhere.

The men and women walk slowly and calmly, without hurrying, for many kilometers. In the morning the women always carry the burden, just as they carry offerings in the evening : the men, wearing most elaborate

clothing, hold their fighting-cocks in their arms. These women never seem tired. Often they are dressed in long, trailing, gaudy sarongs, the upper part of their bodies bare, flowers in their hair. The men, the upper part of their bodies naked, wear flowers in their hair too, usually symmetrical, some at each ear or among the folds of their head-dress—sometimes flowers, sometimes petals. On rare occasions they wear cigarettes in this manner. Cock-fights are allowed, provided they have a permit. But when one sees these Bali men strolling along with their cocks, stroking their backs and erect tails, one comes to the conclusion that there are some cock-fights for which no permission has been granted. Somewhere, on some secret spot, an improvised cock-fight takes place—the fight itself only lasts a few minutes. Iron spurs are fastened on to the cock's legs above the claw ; large sums are gambled away in the space of a few moments and change hands in dollars. The dollar is the Bali standard coin.

And so there is a constant stream of people along the roads which wind past the closed-in villages. In the morning they go to market or to secret cock-fights ; in the afternoon they return from the market and from the sport at which they lost or won dollars. Then, as the sun sets, the cocks are placed for a short time under pens, in front of a temple or on a dyke. They crow in high and low, hoarse and shrill tones ; there they stand under their pens, like gladiator-birds who have that day fought their sword fight and have survived triumphantly ; their masters, either standing or crouching, discuss the fight and their bad or good luck ; sometimes they pick a fresh flower and stick it carefully behind their ear, into the head-cloth. If they are thoroughbred, their bodies are often strong and muscular. But apart from preparing their sawahs, so that their wives and children can plant them, they do nothing, and the richer ones employ people to do this for them.

Occasionally they have four or five wives ; this does not cost much more ; a small marriage portion, and their

wives are their servants, their slaves. They work for their men, those beautiful women with the lithe figures and rounded bosoms; they earn money for them in many different ways, so it is said. As they are not respected there is no question of morality. When they are old they go on toiling and then the nakedness of their bosoms makes an unlovely impression.

This town-life, or at any rate village-life, is a marked feature of Bali—the long roads are the boulevards and avenues. Towards the South, one is struck by the wide amphitheatre of rice-fields which rise beyond the shade through the sunshine into the clouds. These gleaming terraces are very beautiful in Java, and in Bali they are built up even higher, one above the other. Here is the undulating, soft green padi, swayed gently by the wind, over there the bibit fields, which have not yet been planted but are well watered; these reflect most clearly sky and hills, blue hills and white clouds, and stretch away to the horizon, a wide, majestic landscape. Bali rice is very famous.

Everywhere little naked boys drive buffaloes along the road: the white buffaloes are very striking. Even finer are the Bali cattle, which work in the sawah, ploughing up wet lumps of earth, or are put to graze in small herds. These beasts are beautiful, both cows and bulls are slenderly-built; the breed is fine, yet strong: their smooth skin is brown, almost gold sometimes. Their docile, limpid eyes are set between a square brow and a square jaw; a long tail hangs over the angular egg-shaped rump, which is very light in colour, sometimes white.

The young cattle are rather like deer. I have a curious affection for cattle, for strong bulls and good mother-cows, and I have never seen such fine, graceful cattle as those at Bali. These wonderfully beautiful beasts are not "sacred" like the ones I saw at Bengal. They are the essence of poetry in a pastoral scene, and as one of them gambols in front of the car and jumps up the bank and into the field, turning its placid head

towards us, I look round once again, to admire. Long-necked ducks stand and philosophise on the little sawah-dyke until the herdswomen come with long poles, to which are attached their own white and black feathers, and drive them back to their coop as the sun sinks.

The temple, the sawah, and the kraton village give an unusual amount of colour and line to this Bali landscape. As you roll along the smooth road in your car, they rise up with their wajang-architecture, their majesty, their mysterious walls, over and over again, as do the toiling, half-naked men with their beloved cocks. In order to protect their naked bosoms from the sun the women drape dark pieces of cloth from the baskets on their heads from left to right, and peep out above these fluttering rags. About this carrying and walking, about these draperies and the trailing of long clothes through slight clouds of dust, there is a wonderful amount of perfectly natural charm and grace and a sense of beauty. These poses, these colours, from sunrise to the close of day, almost defy description.

The women wear yellow sarongs, green slendang slips, as well as narrow blue girdles. The colours blend into a harmonious whole. Here is a young man, wearing a cherry-red square train over his naked shoulders, a scarlet hibiscus flower at his temples. The azure gauze veils of the young girls, interwoven with dust atoms, glitter in the sunlight. As we gaze at these amazingly graceful figures we find it hard to understand that they are really alive, walking on the roads, past the village walls. . . . This gaudy-coloured life is quite unlike modern life, excepting that . . . you sometimes see the people sitting in a motor.

Along these streets and country roads, with their wealth of beautiful detail, we went from Den-Passar through Kloenkoeng, to Karang-Assem, then back again, and to Kintamani. These names will not convey much to you, but remember them, oh future tourist, for they are the resting-points in the tour across Bali. From Den-Passar, we visited the Poera Astrya, formerly the

most important place of sacrifice of the Bali monarchs, and we found there the Brahmins who chisel and carve out of piety, and not for money. You will stay at a pasangrahan at Den-Passar—do not expect too much ; there is another hotel at Kloenkoeng, somewhat tidier, but without much in the way of food. Your bed and your meals are not very adequate in Bali. It is a pity that the wives of the district-officers do not pay some attention to these little rest-houses. But at Kloenkoeng there is not even a district-officer.

Enough about this trifling discomfort. Fortunately our motor is *so* good and our guide *so* perfect that we forget that there was neither bread nor fish nor wine at Kloenkoeng—nothing but baked rice three times a day—baked rice ! Poeras and again more poeras, temples and again temples, little tabernacles on high stilts, and nine-roofed pagodas, graceful women carrying burdens, men with cocks clasped to their hearts. Here we find some aristocratic craftsmen : a few long-nailed sons of Kasatrya —the caste which ranks second to that of the Brahmins— are busy carving small wooden idols, usually monstrosities, sometimes they colour them vividly—Buddha is never pictured. As a matter of fact, Siva-ism is more prevalent than Buddhism.

Then we saw at Karang-Assem the palace of the Stad (town) holder, Goesti Bagoes Djilantik, for this is his official title. As I do not consider Karang-Assem a town, or this palace a palace, I must leave it to you to collect more interesting impressions than I was able to do. The " palace " consisted of a complex of several muddy court-yards, dilapidated open pendopoppo's, crumbling steps, and open kitchens where sacrificial cakes were being prepared—for there were great religious festivities in progress—some cackling hens, barking gladak dogs, scolding women and their howling children. All this was about as un-regal as one could possibly imagine. It was strange to see in the open air under a roof a bed, with white mosquito curtains, completely covered with cloths and linen : on this bed had lain for many months an

embalmed corpse, a female relative of the stadholder waiting to be burned.

Back to Kloenkoeng and then to Kintamani. Bear these names in mind. Clemenceau took this route and spent the night at Kintamani (1,500 Meters up). A cool spot in the midst of winds among the Bali hills, surrounded by the Tjaloer, Batoer, Aboeng and Ajoeng mountains. One can see right across the hills to the sea and the Noesa Penida, (rogues-island) once a notorious pirate's haunt. The Batoer mountain is most interesting. It is always terribly active, a thick column of dark grey, almost black smoke winds its way out of a cleft flank. There is the rumble of thunder and sometimes the earth quakes at Kintamani, when the mandoor at the hotel gets frightened and wants to go down. For he is lonely if there is no official or tourist with him, and the gods are angry and reveal this by means of the roaring Batoer.

There it lies, close by, threatening. You think you will climb up and peep into its burst flank. But this is not so easily done ; the expedition is very tiring and you sacrifice your shoes to the burning lava. There it lies and the lake is on a lower plane, but not so low as the valley and little village. You picture the Batoer in eruption ; if such a catastrophe were to take place the lake would empty itself from that lower, nevertheless higher, plane, very simply, like a wide tilted basin, into the village and valley. But seemingly the gods watch over the valley dwellers who live fearlessly at the foot of the mountain. For once when there was an eruption and a burning stream of lava made its way downwards, the destructive flood stopped quite close to the village, at the place where the poera-sanctuary was erected out of gratitude.

XXI

In writing about the finest impressions I had in Bali, I must not forget the Dance which we saw performed in the evening by two very young girls, dressed like little goddesses, like small, slender dewi, in their golden kaïns and slendangs with large, three-pointed mitre-coronets. They were children of thirteen, possibly fourteen, years old—at a later age the girls do not dance any more—and they mimicked in their dance a passionate tragedy full of emotional vengeance and anger; one girl's little face was constantly contorted by a violent passion; the other—was she a rival?—adopted an almost supplicating pose. I did not understand the "exhibitor's" explanations. Now and then it seemed to me as if they were mimicking the voice of demons; the gamelan was very expressive. It was quite different from what we had seen at Solo, where as a matter of fact we saw the court dance. In Bali the dance was meant to have a distinct effect on the soul of the people by making them live in what appeared to be a legend of gods and devils and princesses.

The ancients had the stationary and the motionful drama, the still and the moving. If I may be allowed to make use of these expressions to describe these two dances, I should say that the court dance of the bedojos at Solo was stationary, even the foolish pistol shot was dignified—the dance of vengeance and anger of the two Bali girls was motionful. Neither this dance nor the one at Solo was in the slightest degree voluptuous; it was, in spite of the passion, which was more of the mind than of the senses, very chaste, dignified and decorous, and

both these small youthful dancers were artists most worthy of admiration in their art, which they brought to an astonishing climax. Perhaps these dancers are still more or less slaves. In spite of their gifts and artistic talent they have undergone a severe training from their master, not to use the word "proprietor." The position of the Bali woman is anything but enviable, as, although slavery has been abolished, she remains her husband's slave, bought with a dowry. She works for him, she toils for him: far rather would she marry a Chinaman or be housekeeper to a European than be allotted to a man of her own country. But there is one moment when she triumphs in beauty and importance, and this moment is when she offers at the temple—when she goes to perform the Sembaja Dewa, the offering which is dedicated to the gods.

After seeing this ceremony once at twilight in a small temple in the mud—we saw it, unexpectedly, again in a very rich temple, amidst a blaze of sunshine. And the contrast was one of great beauty. It was also of great cleanliness, for on these occasions the temple courts have to be purified of all dirt, and the unclean dogs are banished. Along the road went the women with swaying footsteps, their kaïns trailing, their transparent slendangs about proud bosoms, and on their heads they carried the gracefully-arranged sacrificial baskets, with fruit and flowers. They mounted the high, carved steps ; there were no men, only a few young girls and boys were present. Flowers were wound in their hair, in their head-cloths, and at their ears, and the gold-interwoven, printed linen and silk glittered and shone. The women were triumphant. They are never more beautiful than at this moment of piety—they are never so dignified as when they place their baskets in front of the invisible gods on the long sacrificial tables. Only one man—the priest—went among them.

There was holy water upon which floated flowers. But, besides the priest, there was a priestess, a youthful woman, and kneeling in front of the gods—remember they are always invisible, although they are thought to

be enthroned in the low tabernacles behind the sacrificial tables—she prayed and sang, moving the altar-bell, sprinkling the holy water with a flower over the offerings of flowers and fruit and cakes—what elegant sacrificial cakes, and even roasted meats!—then she tapped the flowers out of her way with a most graceful gesture. It was like a picture of antiquity, and the Bali woman triumphed during this moment of antiquity, in the presence of her gods.

The priestess also was triumphant, and all the other women and the youthful girls—and the little boys—who knelt with her. No missionary should try to alter or improve here. This tender, happy, pagan moment is sure to comfort these sacrificing, praying women for all the misery of their sex—one can see it in the devout expression of their faces and in their soft eyes. And if the men have their cocks and cock-fights, these women have their sacrifice, their prayer and their peaceful moment, when surrounded by state and pomp they are happy for an instant in the presence of their gods, who, invisible, are yet incontestably present. In the middle of Bali, near Goenoeng Kawi, almost inaccessible—as it can only be reached by climbing down the sawah-terraces and wriggling through a square opening carved out of a rock—lies the Hindu monastery. It is difficult to find.

We are to be accompanied by the soldier servant of the district officer of Gianjar. The morning is bathed in sunshine. In a carrying-chair we descend the cobble-stone road between gleaming sawah terraces—the carrying-chair almost capsizes; the men tumble through the little gateway, the mysterious little gateway. It is an enigma, this Hindu sanctuary, this age-old ruined monastery in the middle of Bali, hewn out of the two masses of rocks, intersected by a river, the Pekrisan. A deep, mysterious valley, a sacred place, to which the small gateway has presumably always been the only entrance. Now this mystery-laden atmosphere mingles with the rays of sunshine. In the sacred valley midst murmuring waterfalls, the water of which will eventually surround the sawahs,

we hear the music of water, singing water, as it flows into the sawahs, down the river between boulders.

At one side of the river there are four large monumental grave-stones hewn out of the rocks. At least they appear to be grave stones. Have kings been buried here? Who can tell? Everything is full of mystery here. There is not much to know about this place, in spite of some Sanscrit-like inscriptions. There is much to guess at, yet more to suspect. At the other side of the river there are five of these tjandis or gigantic sepulchres, almost Egyptian in architecture, but Hindu in style. No sculpture. Severe simplicity. Why these grooves under these colossal sarcophagi? Whom—what do they contain, and what was poured down those grooves? Or were they secret passages? Probably not. But we know nothing. Are these square stones with the little round holes sacrificial tables?

Here, to one side, the tufa has been carved out for a monastery. Cells, small and great ones. Were they for hermits, or for the guards of these royal graves? This was probably a pond; did the lotus flower here? We know nothing. But such places, sacred to devout thoughts and worship of gods and kings, who were almost akin, in antiquity, fascinate one to such an extent that in this remote valley I can hardly tear myself away from their enchantment. Over there the bearers rest—they scrimmage and play about in the water. And I am sitting on a rock beside the monastery—beside what was once the monastery or appeared to be—and behind me and in front of me arise the colossal sarcophagi, hewn out of the hill, and about me the sawahs rise towards the sun, whilst the murmur of myriad waterfalls may be heard. Among the green and gold and blue of padi, sun and water, under an arched sky, lies the sacred spot which I have come to see and about which I know nothing except what I can guess and feel. And it is sufficient to realise that our present is no more than the space of a breath in Time. For all this was once the Present, and now it is nought but an unknown Past.

Under the Hindu Past is concealed the still older, still more ancient, manifold Legend, the legend of Keboe-Soewa, giant and glutton, who was too strong, who ate until his parents grew poor and his father tried to do away with him, and had a banyan tree partly cut down so that if the strong son passed he might be crushed by the tree. But Keboe-Soewa simply caught the gigantic falling tree in both arms like a reed and flung it into the river. Nevertheless he was not allowed to return to the parental house, and after that he roamed about Bali and became the builder of the most ancient temples. With his powerful nails this artistic giant carved and chiselled the porous stone, and it was he who invented the demoniac and monstrous designs which have always been used to decorate the Bali temples.

There is also a legend about that other giant with his tusks, Begawa Kasisapan, who married Dewi Danoe, the goddess of the Batoer Lake, which lies like a lofty, fragile mirror above the valley. She revealed herself as a Shining Light to her terrible lover ; her beaming gentleness dominated his rough barbarity, and their son was the proud Masa-Danawa, which is the giant born out of Shining Light, and so proud was he that offerings could only be brought to *him* and no longer to the gods. He was a magician, and at his command the capok-trees grew long trains and bright sarongs, and the rice-blades were heavy with koetoepats, which is diamond-shaped plaited coconut leaves containing boiled rice. But the indignant gods, who did not like to do without their offerings, deserted Bali and betook themselves to the centre of Java. Here they settled down on the mountains, and a struggle ensued between the gods and the shining water-nymph's proud son, and of course he was beaten in spite of his army of magicians and demons, because in those days the gods always triumphed.

On board the *Both* on the return voyage. Over there lie the pigs, travelling placidly towards their doom. I was reading these legends once again when I caught sight of Ma-Patimah. She now sells her gold-woven materials,

but at one time she was one of the wives of Bali's Crown Prince. And when he died she was to be burned with all his other wives, as a sacrifice to death. Her feet and those of all the other women were to be bound, first with cords and afterwards with floral chains. And then they would all—from a high plank above the funeral pyre of the dead man, amidst the beat of the gamelan and the singing of hymns, as they shouted : " I am coming. I am coming, oh Lord and Master ! "—be hurled on to the blazing pyre ; a heavy stone would weigh down their flower-decked, bound feet, so that they should drop straight into the fire and not to one side of the leaping flames.

In the guarded palace Ma-Patimah (she was called after her little daughter) awaited her fate with her companions. She had consented to the fiery death because to refuse would put her parents to shame. But on the night before the ceremony she loved life too much and managed to escape across the palace-walls and . . . seventeen companions, who were to be burned too, fled with her. She fled, Ma-Patimah, from Kloenkloeng to Singaradjah and implored the Government there to help her. She was safe. . . . Since then, the cruel rite of suttee has been abolished. Ma-Patimah is now no longer a Rajah's wife but sells her beautiful materials. With us and with the pigs she travelled to Soerabaia—where an American steamship with many passengers, eager to buy, was expected—to try and do a deal. Never once whilst in the palace of the Crown Prince of Bali had she thought she might at a riper age become a worthy saleswoman.

XXII

The Dutch East Indies can be seen in various ways. The observer can view them from the point of view of the official, the soldier, the planter, the merchant, the missionary, the lover of art and nature, and from the point of view of the tourist, perhaps even from several other points of view. But from whatever point of view he looks at India, the spectator, if he is at all sensitive, is always struck by the mysticism and the immensity of this world of the East, which until now has been dominated by a small Western country. However modern may be one's ideas on the subject of this domination (the word may have an unpleasant sound to our new mentality), it has been an established fact up to the present, and the despots have not been hated as much by the races dominated for centuries as despots usually are. This is because from the very beginning we have followed a system of Government which for a long time has proved its justification, although it may have grown obsolete, as all systems must do. Times change much more suddenly than they did in former days. New ideals were blown across from turbulent Europe.

The autonomy of Insulinda is but a question of time. There is something rather attractive about the fact that the native of high birth is nowadays usually a man who is interested in our Western culture. Nearly all Regents speak Dutch quite perfectly ; twenty years ago a Regent who knew Dutch was an exception. In spite of racial differences, which for so long appeared to be insuperable

obstacles, there is a growing sympathy between Oriental and Western elements. The present-day Regent, who eventually will have to stand on his own feet, is occasionally very successful. One cannot predict how the new state of affairs will develop—the new conditions are like the landscape itself, like the wide prospect of these shelving mountain vistas, midst volcanoes which will some day break out, and hills which shall for ever be laid low.

In these critical days, both merchant and planter have their difficult moments, but probably there is a brighter future for them. There is a far greater pathos about the official, whether he looks on the new conditions in the light of new ideals or in the dusk of the still lingering "depression." His profession has always been a very fine one. An ideal profession for a man who did not expect to get rich but felt a desire to work, to create, to perfect and so—to rule—the hated word crops up irresistibly. He was often a good ruler, a ruler who could serve his country and his ideals, even though he might develop into an autocrat in his district. The bureaucracy at Weltevreden or Buitenzorg was sometimes a secret irritation to the man who *had* to act, but if he knew how to enforce his will he often had the satisfaction of feeling himself a king in his by no means small country.

This career of power, coupled with a certain amount of danger, demanded superior men. In the past, superior residents have been the rule, mediocre ones in the minority. Having as assistant-resident learned to curb his youthful enthusiasm, he could later on, as controller, be "someone." He had learned to act without indecision in his district and at the same time to exercise great tact towards those who were of a different race, the native officials, from compound and village chiefs to Wedonos and patis. He had to be at the same time a future ruler and a diplomat. He had to prepare himself, although young, to be a father in the spiritual sense. He was expected to love the country and the people among whom he was seeking his career and he must never look upon his

profession as merely a " job." The " job " would never make him rich !

The glass jars with sugar lumps and the large brilliants which tradition says used to be given as presents to the officials' wives, are in reality nothing but a picturesque detail, illustrating the less ideal condition of the past, and belong to an antediluvian period and to the realm of exceptions.

The official, even the junior one, must have ideals beyond money. He must take a delight in caring for his district, in making it flourish and thrive. His reward would be only this : the consciousness of being someone and of doing something, not only for himself alone, but for others in an ever-widening circle. This circle has grown very wide during the last few years owing to the motor. In the old days a controller had no motor. He had nothing but a bandy or a horse. He used to go on a ten-days' tour of inspection and felt happy on his horse or in his little trap, happy although he had left his young wife and child behind. It was all so pleasant and friendly. He knew each little house in each compound, every house and every tree. In the evenings as he sat in his rest-house, making notes and writing his report, he often had a chance of inviting the Wedono to come and chat with him. On these occasions he found out a number of things. Now his car rushes so quickly through the district that he scarcely has time to remember and know the names, faces and personalities of the native chiefs. The assistant-resident could and can do so now for all those whom he fathers, but soon there will be no more of that.

If he arranged a monthly meeting for all the lesser Javanese officials, all this hierarchy which delights the native, especially the Javanese—with his inborn love of aristocracy—he could discuss, smooth over, put right all affairs, difficulties and differences. After such a discussion, which might last for a couple of hours, he would be the mediator between all these people and the Regent and Resident.

Batoer Temple, Bali.

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I have always found something beautiful in this upward grade, this hierarchic tradition. Possibly because as an artist I have an eye for harmony and rhythm, and that in this mode of Government, this simultaneous service and rule, I saw signs of such rhythm and harmony. But not every official is an artist, and for this reason I was pleased to hear them say quite often that my opinion was theirs also, and not only that of an unpractical and romantic literary man. I here put my own impressions into words: that Malays, Sundanese and Javanese, on account of their contemplative, somewhat limited mentality, have no initiative and do not like taking responsibility; that they regard the driving of some of their advanced leaders with shuddering antipathy; that communism is still to them a word and a mystery and a Western idea which they do not appreciate because instinct tells them the simple truth, that equality never was, and never can be.

Next to the banyan rises the brittle bamboo-stalk and the ant writhes under the tiger's claw. To pay hormat with a semba to anyone of higher rank is as natural as that the bamboo stem bows to the banyan tree. If you abolish semba and hormat the native will conform to this regulation, but in his heart he disapproves of it, does not understand it, and never will, although one or two fanatics may explain to him that he is a human being, just like the Soenan of Solo. He does not see it that way. His monarchs are descended from gods and heroes, as is shown to him by the dalang (exhibitor) at the shadow-plays, and in spite of everything he respects the European despot who rules by his side. If he joins in the insolent shouts of the new crowd (or what pretends to be a crowd) it is only outward recklessness—and when he loves the official, who in former days walked beneath the sunshade which has now been abolished, he would like that sunshade back again.

Some things of the past, some things of the present. Times change. Re-organisation goes on. There is bound to be improvement—the Regents, who are growing more

and more intellectual, will rule more and by themselves, the controller will in the future be eliminated, the assistant-resident will become more of a general district-officer than the European foster-father of the past. The close ties will grow looser.

It is possible that all this will be to the advantage of a new prosperous era of independence. I only want to point out that there is a certain pathos, especially when looked at from the point of view of the official, who remembers the days that have passed—and that the charm—though not money—which his calling held for our energetic Dutchman in former years has almost vanished.

At any rate, whenever I, as an outsider, venture to suggest this, everyone agrees with me.

XXIII

On the eve of leaving India I cannot help wondering whether the Malay and the Javanese have grown different in the course of years, owing to evolution and important events in the world's history. War and revolution in Europe have certainly opened out new perspectives to him. He felt a thrill—was it fear of a possible injustice which may have happened to him years ago, or the expectation of an unimaginable, more beautiful future. But he grew placid in spirit once more, and decided that Allah knew best. The mind and soul of these people are so different from ours. The dream of life holds them captive and they are too happy in this captivity to wish for anything else. On the surface a certain Europeanisation appeals to them, but only to their vanity. To walk about or sit dreamily, clad in a well-cut, white, tailored coat with a stiff, almost military collar—such is the present fashion for everyone—and to wear this coat over their kaïn, with a velvet or silk skull-cap on their short hair, is their ideal. Most of them sit in the cinema every evening dressed like this, gazing at the cowboys and Charlie Chaplin and think that they are behaving in a most cultured and Western manner.

Do these gruesome tragedies and low comedies really appeal to them ? I do not know. Perhaps a subconscious, inborn love of beauty slumbers in their souls, making them accept life as it appears to be. Coming of a race which was second in physical beauty to the Caucasian one, particularly as it was revealed in the ancient Hellenes, the natives yet possessed an innate grace and their

women great charm, and there was also a real beauty in everything which they built, wove, worked, forged and made. Everything is strikingly beautiful, from a Menang-Kebau house to a Javanese basket made out of a palm leaf, for ephemeral use. And the people who build, weave and make in this manner go in the evenings to the cinema, to what is in most cases a complete ruination of all good taste and finer perceptions: the porters dress like cow-boys and wear photographs of Douglas Fairbanks in their caps. Analyse, if you can, this psychical contradiction. I cannot, however, see in this craze a true desire to absorb the Spirit of Europe, any more than I can see in the tailored coat a desire to be the European's equal.

Can the actual essence of our culture penetrate into their minds. I do not think so; any more than what slumbers within their souls can become clear to us. The earth is small; the races which have sprung up upon it can be counted, but there are thousands of gradations in the races which people this small earth, and they remain a mystery. No more than the native will ever entirely understand what and why we love and admire, and for what we are striving and longing, can we Westerners understand the Oriental's thoughts, what he desires, and what is his life's ideal—if this be definitely outlined in his mind. These men's desires are quite different from those of a European workman at the present time; they remain childlike and traditional, and are born to serve and to honour the descendants of their ancient races. We ourselves remain to them interlopers whom they tolerate with more or less conscious philosophy.

And in this childlike and traditionally-minded soul there is something slumbering and occasionally awaking which will always remain a mystery to the Westerner, which he denies, if he has no finer perceptions—an occult Force. This Force, though it may more often be dormant than awake, seems to me latent in all these minds, shining through all these eyes. It seems to me that this force comes to them from the soil itself, from the sky, and

from mighty Nature, in whose growth it seems to be hidden. In each tree, each blade, each fibre, over all the earth, there is something hidden which eludes us, in spite of all our wisdom, when we strive to approach. This mysterious thing is so definite in Insulinda that sometimes it cannot hide, and reveals itself, pouring its mysterious influence not only over hill and forest and tree and flower but into man who is born pure of race here, and whose existence is inextricably bound to this ancient soil.

Sometimes the native knows and understands subconsciously things which we do not know and understand. It is not in the mentality of official, leader, or businessman to take such things into account. I was all the more struck to find, when talking to a missionary, who for many years has lived and worked in the Sunda Islands, that he was quite certain that there was "something" hidden in the native and in the native mind, something which is occasionally revealed—an occult force. Feeling it so strongly myself I was much gratified to find it in someone whose ideas, occupation, and religious views are so entirely different from mine.

Man's imagination is small, I believe, and for everything which he sees in his mind there exists a reality. Where the native believes in various "elmoes" (Arabic —ilm—knowledge) such magic "elmoes" must exist in his mind. He cannot have invented them; as a matter of fact he cannot invent anything; of what he calls "invention" there is somewhere, without a doubt, a prototype. An elmoe is the science of how to make use of a higher power in order to attain a certain object. Consequently an elmoe is magic. There are various elmoes. There is the elmoe to grow rich. There is the elmoe to calculate lucky days; there is the elmoe to make oneself or someone else invisible or invulnerable; there is the elmoe to cause or to cure insanity, to torture oneself without hurting oneself (the fakirs !), to prevent or bring about rain, storm, or anger in nature or human being.

It is easy to smile at this belief. It is more difficult to understand how it came into being if there was never

any cause. He who possesses an elmoe is doekoen, which means not only doctor, but more especially magician. The doekoen knows the "rapals," the various deeds to be performed; he knows the "djamper" or magic words which must be muttered or, as the native says, "blown." Usually the favourite of the gods or of the devil is only gifted with one "elmoe"; an elmoe is either of divine or of diabolical origin.

I believe the native attaches more value to being conscious of having an elmoe than to the thought of having the vote or other modern rights. With his child-like nature, he will scarcely know how to use such rights. His occult Force will tell him how to use his elmoe, even although the origin of this elmoe may remain a secret to him.

I do not wish to go into the thousand and one details connected with these strange things. I do not venture to assert that a dried lizard with a slit tail, hung as an amulet about the neck, is a charm for invisiblity, or that clay-balls laid under the body of a woman who died in childbirth on Friday, buried without a coffin and laid sideways, should possess magic. Dried in the sun, stamped into a powder, and blown into a bedroom, this powder drugs the sleepers. But I believe it is as stupid to laugh at these things as it is to accept them immediately as indisputable facts. They have existed for centuries. Perhaps they have been corrupted. To their influence other influences may be linked, unknown to any now. Once more: to deny is easier than to explain in any way how a superstition—let us call it this—was born and continued to exist. That Nature is an accomplice to these superstitions is not an explanation, but a fact, which makes us think.

The datura-flower has since ancient times been the flower of witches, the flower of unholy magic. If you go up the hill to Tosari you will see the datura-shrub growing by the roadside. It is wonderful to see these flowering shrubs along the winding road: the great white blooms hang in their thousands from the twigs, like bells. It is as if

they accompany the witches' saws with their magic music. I do not know why these flowers have a curious effect on me. Is it because I know that they are the witches' flowers? They are fine, white, graceful blooms, but never will you be able to compare these bells with Christmas bells. Why not? Well, there is something demoniacal about them. These pure white flowers hang there like altar-bells for a Black Mass. Their whiteness suggests the powdered dullness of the yielding bodies of prostitutes. Roses and lilies are not like this. Their odour is like a nauseating vapour, like bad scent.

These flowers are the Javanese magic flowers, as they were those of Antiquity. The leaves of the shrubs, crushed to powder, are said to soothe pain and are in this case beneficial. But the fragrant pollen of the wicked, white flowers blown through a tube over anyone asleep seems to make him swoon and sick; the ancient witches knew that the pollen of their daturas did this. Do not imagine that there is one native, particularly among the most simple and childlike ones, who does not believe in these things. But he who is childlike and simple sometimes knows more of the world's secrets than a haughty man of science, and accepts the strangest things in all simplicity.

Sirih-spitting, stone-throwing in haunted houses—who shall explain these things? They are so easily explained by him who denies their mystery, and thinks that they are nothing but deception, intimidation, and the revenge of sly, skilful enemies, who will yet be discovered. I like to explain them in this way myself when I am shown the haunted houses and told the facts. But immediately after this prosaic explanation it suddenly comes to me that there is none; that there is something in me which denies this denial of the mystery, and I believe, although I do not know, and cannot explain, and do not even try to.

Yes, I believe—I believe in the evil power of datura-flowers. I believe that there are elmoes. I believe that beneficial and hostile forces hover about us, right through our ordinary, everyday life. I believe that the Oriental,

whoever he may be, can exert a greater power over these forces than the Westerner, who is more prosaic and more immersed in "business" and money-making. And sometimes when I look into the eyes of a Malay or a Javanese for one moment longer than is usual, I not only believe, but I know that, in spite of racial differences, if he is friendly towards me he can cause something good, if he is hostile, something bad, to happen to me. And this feeling in me is so strong that I am astonished at the jovial, mocking shouts of laughter from the naïve Westerner, who thinks he is a wiseacre and who would like to explain the whole ancient soul of this mystery-drenched East with a few didactic catch-phrases.

XXIV

We are on our way to the Chinese Ocean, on board the *Tjikembang* (Java—China—Japan—Line). Java is behind us. Bali is behind us and Celebes is in sight. We stop at Macassar and go ashore. We have stood in Celebes. Who can deny it? We have even motored through Celebes, I mean through Macassar and outside of Macassar. In any case we have been there.

I cannot tell you any more. Macassar seemed to me one of these unimportant places which do not leave a single impression. And my itinerary does not include Celebes, though I am quite willing to believe that Boni is interesting and Menado equally so. But we must restrain ourselves, and however much I should have liked to see the Moluccas, the Spice Islands, we are on our way to Shanghai, for we shall not be able to land at Hongkong because of the dockers' strike.

So it is a fairly negative beginning, which comes as a breathing space. The four months in Java and Bali were by no means negative and rather too full; once on board we begin to feel a little rested.

With this feeling of rest comes the consciousness that we are in a "cargo boat" which takes a dozen passengers. Of course I knew that I was in a cargo boat, but I was guileless enough not to suspect beforehand how very much in a cargo boat I was to be. The Captain says to us: "We only stayed a few hours at Macassar—we had not much to do—so that we should reach Balik-Papan sooner; we shall get finished sooner there, too."

I think I must have smiled somewhat inanely, still

not realising how very much in a cargo-boat I was. The managers of the J.C.J.L. had received me so charmingly at Batavia, and the agents at Soerabaia had attended to me so well, that I had thought : " She may be a cargo-boat, but one with twelve passengers, and first-class, too ! " And I had seen the cabins, spacious and comfortable, with two comfortable covered-in decks, containing delightful Hongkong chairs, partitioned off with glass, because at Hongkong the temperature grows colder. Why, then, should I not have taken this cargo-boat, which was supposed to have the quickest connection between Java and China and Japan? There are cargo-boats and cargo-boats. I was not in an orange boat, but in a royal cargo-boat. And the J.C.J.L. has a good reputation.

Then with the guileless innocence of the tourist who thinks he is being very practical but sometimes commits blunders, I said : " And how long are we to be at Balik-Papan, captain ? "

" Oh, perhaps seventy days," was the skipper's answer.

I grinned ; it was a joke, of course. I had just heard of Balik-Papan. It was one of the four concerns of the " Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappy," which formed a part of the famous " Royal." And had I not already been at Pangkalan Brandan ? And did I not know all about oil now ?

" Come, Captain," I said, " just be serious for one moment and tell me how long we are to be at Balik-Papan? Is it not very much like Pangkalan Brandan ? "

The captain grew serious.

" How can I say ? That depends on the loading, of course. But possibly it will only last twelve days ; usually the loading does not take longer than that."

I became cold about the region of my heart. I felt enveloped in a cloud of despondency.

" Captain," I said, growing pale, " I must go to Japan to see the cherries blossom. The Goddess of the cherry-blossom does not wait with her flower-festival until our ship has filled her belly after seventeen or twelve days'

Goesti Bagoes with his wife and daughter.

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loading, and it is a long way yet to the Japanese cherry-orchards."

"Well, perhaps it will be better than you think," our captain assured me good-naturedly, and gave me a pitying glance.

But his pity did not grow more eloquent. We approach the Bay of Balik-Papan, and anchor *in* the bay—I do not know at which latitude or longitude. Somewhere.

I look out. Balik-Papan, a metropolis, spreads itself towards the distant horizon.

"Why are we waiting?" I ask. "Why do we lie here, lazy and tired, like a sea-nymph on the smooth water?"

We are waiting until our predecessor has finished loading.

A finger points to the wharf. It is, I believe, Wharf IV. Wharf IV. will be ours, also that of the *Tjikembang*. Wharf I, II, and III, were certainly not worthy of us.

And when will that predecessor have finished loading, and shall we be lying at the wharf which is destined for us?

Mystery. Sailors' square shoulders are shrugged. This "special correspondent" is much too inquisitive. Whoever could know when the predecessor will have finished loading!

It is true I asked a stupid question. I am not quick at seeing these simple things. I am still so full of Môdjôpâhit and Bali, of shrines and flower- and fruit-offerings. This is Balik-Papan, the sister concern of Pangkalan Brandan, and I know all about it. It is only oil, the "Royal." What a pity I did not make some money over the "Royal." What a fool I was at the time. It can't be helped. I am not a financial genius.

A little irritable and impatient, I lie down on my long chair. Impatience is my greatest fault. As soon as possible I want to see the cherries flower in the cherry-orchards of the Rising Sun. My whole voyage has been a preparation to see the cherry-orchards of the Rising Sun in bloom. Good gods shall I see nothing? Here I lie close to Balik-Papan, not even *at* Balik-Papan.

A motor-boat goes ashore. I am sulking. I don't

want Balik-Papan, I want cherry-orchards and the Rising Sun. I know all about oil. I do not wish to know anything more about oil. I don't want to write about oil, and I was not meant to get rich by means of oil.

Evening falls. What is it ? I am alarmed. A glimmer of light hovers over Balik-Papan. Is it really a metropolis ? White towers, round ramparts—Ah no, these are tanks. Is it an ancient city ? On immense iron tripods, scented offerings (is it oil ? It does not smell like that) are being lit. In honour of whom ? Divus Petroleum ? Fumes ranging from blue to black rise upwards towards the paling stars. And over that metropolis Balik-Papan, lying there on the East coast of Borneo—I thought only Dyaks and slumbering tigers lived here—thousands of electric lights are made to twinkle as it were with a fairy-wand. What wonderful lights. It is like Naples or like Lido or Venice. A metropolis, a metropolis of oil ! Such is Balik-Papan.

A little irritated with Balik-Papan, the Borneo oil-metropolis which is the cause of our ship dallying like a nymph on the smooth water, I decide that it is not so very big after all. For you can count the lights.

I start counting them. I get to thirty, to sixty, to a hundred. Then with a glance and a gesture I count them by the hundred, I get to three, to four hundred, a hundred or so does not matter.

It is not a metropolis, I argue. It is only Balik-Papan. It is probably only a little larger than Pangkalan-Brandan. Oil does not interest me. When I *could* I did *not* buy any " Royals." Fool that I am. And after all it is but an illusion. Riches and Balik-Papan. It only looks so vast because these four hundred lights—let us say five hundred —are so clearly reflected in the calm bay. Reflected ? Did you think that trembling mirage was reflected in the water ? It is only on the surface of the water, an optical delusion, which makes us see the reflection as if it were mirrored to the bottom of the sea. Everything is an illusion. The whole world and the " Royal " is an illusion also . . . h'm.

Very cross, I betake myself to my bunk and sleep, and dream of oil-offerings to Pluto, the god of riches. On awaking next morning I feel a slight tremor. Our sea-nymph swims towards Wharf IV. We moor, but how long are we to be here ? It is a mystery which depends on the tonnage to be loaded. For we are a cargo-boat; at least, that is what I should call the *Tjikembang* with her twelve first-class passengers. There are no second-class ones.

I cast my eyes along the wharf, which juts out to left and right, and the wagons which roll along on a network of rails. But feeling thoroughly out of temper I refuse to look at those wagons or to be interested in oil. I am looking for cherry-orchards.

A man whom I do not know comes up to me. He is the legal advisor to the Administration of Balik-Papan. He hands me a letter with great formality. The letter is from the Chief Administrator, Mr. Camper Titsingh, who welcomes us, and invites me to have a look at all the things which have been made at Balik-Papan, and hopes that I will lecture to the intellectual community at Balik-Papan.

It is all very courteous and friendly. Needless to state, I am suddenly very much interested in oil, even though I have not a single share in the "Royal." It is difficult to refuse. Over there is the chief administrator's car. I leave the ship, walk down the long wharf and drive to the head-office and am brought to Dr. Camper Titsingh, who is the representative of "Western effort" on the East coast of Borneo.

A young man, possibly under forty (I find it difficult to tell age) with an energetic, placid face, with dark, intelligent eyes. The youthful ruler of Balik-Papan and its population of, I think, about 20,000 souls. A taking smile, a firm handshake.

One man is made to charm another or to repulse him. Dr. Camper Titsingh gets round me altogether. All at once I rave about oil. I want to see everything, every single thing. Pangkalan-Brandan ? It is a village compared to Balik-Papan ; it is an oil-village, a hamlet.

Balik-Papan is a metropolis. There is a map on the wall. I peep at it curiously and am indeed intensely interested now. I see the territory of the Sultan of Koetei, the numerous estuaries which flow into the bay, the concession-sites (begun in 1896) and known as Mathilde, Nonnie, Louise, daughters of the first Concessionary, Samarinda—where the Assistant-Resident stays—and further North, Tengarpang—where the Sultan of Koetei resides—and Tarakang, the rich oil-island, a veritable cask of oil, now in the hands of the "Royal" and which is possibly more important than I ought to say.

Western effort! I can't help admiring, though I am longing for my cherry-blossoms. Yes, I want to see it all, but it is more difficult for me, oh reader, to see and understand Balik-Papan than the Boeroeboedoer, the ruins of Môdjôpâhit and the poeras of Bali. Yet I must try and give you, oh shareholder, who will never spend seventeen or twelve or six days—as I did!—in Wharf IV. at Balik-Papan whilst your cargo-boat which is to take you to the Japanese cherry-blossom-spring, lingers, before putting out to sea—an idea of this mighty creation—the "Royal."

XXV

I DO not know exactly how this wealth of oil of Balik-Papan was discovered—I forgot to ask—but such riches in the earth's lap are sometimes found in the most simple manner. Occasionally an ex-soldier or some other man with initiative wanders about our colonies with his njaï (housekeeper), a Winchester rifle and a gramophone. He is a seeker after adventure, a concession-hunter, and would be a good character for a boys' book, a fascinating hero for a modern novel with not too romantic " adventures." In Borneo he is out for gold, possibly for maspoeti (platinum), but the natives know so well the value of these metals that they try to keep the bearings of the precious seams a secret whenever they can. Oil, however, is a thing which only the Westerners, who are so enormously clever, can exploit to advantage, even for the native. The natives can delve for gold themselves, but it is difficult to tap oil out of the earth in large quantities.

So when the concession-hunter shows them a bottle of petroleum and asks him if he has seen that " muyah " (oil) anywhere and knows where to find it they are quite willing to point out the spot in exchange for a good tip. They probably suspect that they are indicating the source of millions, but on the other hand they are quite certain that they could not themselves cause these millions to flow. For this purpose there must be some sort of Western Magic. . . .

Now I do not know what happened in the district of the Sultan of Koetei. But we do know that oil has been obtained in a world-famous amount, and that the paraffin-

factory here is the largest in the world. Western "effort" has reason to be very proud of this fact. Do not expect of me, reader, that I shall explain to you all the secrets of crude oil, of the refinery, the distillery, of benzine, kerosin, solar-oil and of "residue." I suspect that the modern epic of the kings of Petroleum and the lyric chant of paraffin will prove too difficult a subject for the pen and word of the tourist-poet-writer-sightseer; and it is a strange thing that in spite of the most lucid explanations I do not feel sufficiently educated in "technical" subjects, and that my gaze strays every now and then to the romantic part of the scene that the "real" part just glides past me. This is not right at all, it is very weak-minded.

But as we go past the distillery and see the fierce fires raging in the bellies of the boilers, then I cannot help being fascinated by those roaring fires, and when I walk past the cooling-tower with the coolers, and see the spray of the symmetrical fountains and rushing waterfalls, I cannot help being fascinated by those jets of water also. And I make up romantic stories of fire and of water, and forget all about oil and paraffin. It is very ungrateful towards my excellent guides, and yet this awe-inspiring town of iron and steel, of tanks and boilers and pumps makes an overwhelming impression on me. And an engine-room full of fly-wheels looks to me like a modern Cyclops. By means of mysterious prison doors, which are opened and closed most cautiously, we penetrate into the sudden cold mystery of the cooling chamber where an artificial North wind blows about us. The workmen whom we see at work here are of various nationalities: Javanese Malays, Lascars, from the coasts of Malabar. There are no Dyaks; a few Boeginese. The population consists of about fifteen thousand or more people.

There is a great deal of tragedy among these people. There are women here who may be the heroines of a drama. Once a betrayed husband shut his wife's lover into a damped-down boiler which he was busy cleaning, and boiled him into beef-tea. There was a pronounced smell

of beef-tea in this boiler-house and so the crime was brought to light. The sinister horror of this anecdote shows what revenge these rough workmen are capable of.

No, I will not tell you how many kinds of lubricating oils, from coarse to refined ones, are made and mixed here ; you would not believe me in any case. Allow me to take you instead into the candle factory, where the female element—sometimes the heroines of drama—work with deft fingers. There are candles for China, white, almost transparent ones, and offering- and altar-candles of aniline red. It is a charming picture after all the mighty violence of fire and water and wheels and the brimful oil-tanks, which remind me of Rachel in the " Juive " : you remember that in this opera, which you loved in your youth, the " falcon," mezzo-soprano, is thrown into boiling oil.

Twenty or thirty machines make the candles elegant and slim and round, pull the wicks through them and fashion the pointed ends. Blue papers fall and glide through the air and are suddenly transformed into cases, the length of candles ; it is all like magic. And it all happens on the East coast of Borneo, this work of industrial civilisation. A number of Bengalese coolies, who look like so many learned, long-legged Tagores, with their wise, dark gaze, have loaded the *Tjikembang* with many boxes, little boxes and drums. To the tune of their sing-song and after a lengthy delay—was it five, six or fourteen days, oh captain ?—we once more made for the briny deep. A high sea, with glittering pearl-topped waves, undulates about the ship. It is the sea of Celebes and we sail past the islands of the Suli-Archipelago into the Sea of Suli. These are the seas and islands of the pirates, who still rule the waves here with more or less undisputed power. Do those sails over there on the horizon belong to the barques or proas of these pirates. They rob each other's ships of fish, steal each other's wives and children, and who can say through what romantic atmosphere our placid vessel is threading her monotonous course ? Then past Mindoro, into the Chinese Ocean.

I try, during these days and nights, to see something besides water and sky and far-away islands, because, after all, this sea and sky and those rocks which are unknown to me are *Chinese* waters, skies and shores. But it all looks the same until all at once I catch sight of my Chinese junk, then everything changes in an instant. The waves have a different turn, the clouds and rocks a different outline. And the junk over there, two white junks—for they always sail in couples in order to safeguard themselves from the pirates—jut out like dragons' wings, ribbed as if with the bones of some fable-like animal.

Now we approach Hongkong, unexpectedly, because on account of the general strike, of which we were already told in Soerabaia, we thought we were going straight to Shanghai. Now, after all, we are nearing Hongkong. Are not the bay and the harbour more famous than are the harbours of Naples and Rio-de-Janeiro ? Hongkong is the Island of the Sacred River. Now that we are in China poetic names will be wafted towards us like sweet zephyrs. It is a pearl-coloured night. The moon, which shines through a moist haze, is almost full. It is the mist of Hongkong, well-known and notorious. But the atmosphere is mild, still and mysterious. Above Hongkong lies in a vague haze the mainland, that of the Nine Dragons. How beautiful are these names ! Over there among the hills glitters the town with its thousands of electric lights. We come to anchor and shall sleep under the magic silver moonlight outside of Hongkong.

Next morning we pass through the narrow strait between Kawloon and Hongkong, with all its water traffic, in sight of the town, more prosaic in daylight, with no high buildings on the quay and piled up the slope. There are American and British warships, dark veils of smoke trailing across the sky from their funnels. Hundreds of other ships : Chinese junks, Chinese flags and pennants, red and white pennants—with characters like bleeding spiders—flapping in the rising breeze. Chinese advertisements, Chinese voices, Chinese monosyllables. Sam-

Poera Batoer (Bali).

Bat-grotto on the way to Karang-Asem (Bali).

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pans rowed by women, who at the same time carry their children on their backs. This is called Victoria, and over there is the Peak and the Peak Hotel, with the pale road winding up the hillside, like a great balcony. On the proas and in the sampans the women make their tea and cook their green soups, oblivious of the danger of fire.

We arrive one day after the settlement of the strike, which was of a very serious political nature. There is civil war in China between the President of Peking and the President of Canton. Fighting is going on in the interior. We do not notice much of the war and political strikes here excepting that the Hongkong Hotel is crowded with people who were unable to get away.

Our rooms have been engaged by wireless in the Repulse-Bay Hotel. We drive away from the town. The motor goes along a road which has been hewn out of the hills, arabesque-fashion, in and out of the bays. A fantastic but majestic scenery which I shall soon learn to realise as Chinese. . . . A fishing-village called Aberdeen. . . . A few Chinese temples with porcelain gods and dragons on the roof. . . . Bends and turnings . . . hills and rocks . . . a golf-course. . . . Over there we see a white, luxurious hotel: Repulse-Bay Hotel, situated on the bay where once the English drove back the Chinese.

A white-lacquer luxurious hotel-room, a white enamelled hotel bath-room, a closed-in verandah with large basket-chairs. Your trunks about you—a pleasant sight after you have had nothing but your suit-case—tea, cakes, little wicker bathing-huts down below on the beach, a garden full of flowers, red carnations and an orgy of white marguerites; in the evening dancing and a jazz-band, Pêche Melba, décolleté backs, and dinner-jackets: in short the usual details of a hôtel de luxe, which, although you may sniff in disdain at its banality, nevertheless appeals to you as you come from the limited space of your boat.

This is the week-end hotel of the inhabitants of Hongkong. It is rather far away from the town, but with its swimming, sailing, golf and tennis, what more can they desire?

We stayed at Hongkong a week. The next day was a Sunday. The absolute peace is beneficent. The bay between its rocks, though it looks like a scene on the stage, is fine. In the distance, hazy junks and dragon-screen-sails. In the evening moonlight and champagne, the marguerites looking like little white stars down below in the garden ; this is not really China, it is more like " England," Oriental England, but it is all pleasing, very pleasing.

It is a hot spring with a clouded, lowering sky. If you motor round the Hongkong Island you will find along the sands a surprising line of rocks, with creeks and streams flowing into the sea. When the sun breaks through, the pines grow fragrant. There are several wild, flowering shrubs. The British have every reason to be proud of the way they have laid it out. The Botanical Garden is a hill of tropical vegetation, which is all the more appreciated because the ground here appears to be stony and sterile. This little piece of English China is admirable. It is nothing but a preparation, a prelude to the real China. Over there a few women are walking about on pathetic little stumpy feet. Although the Republic abolished this " adat," we see several of these little martyred women. There goes in a sedan-chair a splendid-looking Chinaman, with long, grey moustache and beard, and large spectacles veiling his supercilious gaze. Exactly as one pictured a Chinese man of learning ! I am in Hongkong, but—there is no doubt about it—I am also in China. The atmosphere in and about me is quite different from that of Java, and Sumatra, Paris and London. I am exceedingly sorry that there are no pig-tails ; they were so decorative.

But very pleased to be in China—be it only at Hongkong, I get out my " Guide Officiel," which was given to me by Henri Borel, and I sincerely hope that something of the giver's spirit may surround me whilst I am in China.

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